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SIR HARRY PARKES IN CHINA



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SIR HARRY PARKES IN CHINA

BY

STANLEY LANE-POOLE

M.A., LITT.D.; PROFESSOR OF ARABIC AT TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN;
AUTHOR OF THE LIFE OF LORD STRATFORD DE REDCLIFFE;
SALADIN; A HISTORY OF EGYPT IN THE MIDDLE AGES, ETC.

WITH A PORTRAIT AND MAPS

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1901

WDR

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TO

**MRS LOCKHART
(CATHARINE PARKES)**

WHO SHARED ALL HER BROTHER'S INTERESTS
FROM THE TIME WHEN SHE WELCOMED HIM TO CHINA IN 1841
TO THIS DAY, SIXTY YEARS LATER
WHEN SHE GAVE THE LAST TOUCH TO HIS MEMOIRS
THIS BRIEF RECORD OF HIS GREAT SERVICES
TO ENGLAND AND TO CHINA
IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED

PREFACE

THE events of the past year in China constitute a curious and melancholy commentary on half a century of diplomatic effort, enforced repeatedly by warlike arguments. In 1839 there was no foothold where a 'foreign devil' might stand in all China, and the war of 1840-2 was undertaken in order to obtain those elementary rights of fair treatment and personal security which merchants expect from every State. The Treaty of Nanking provided all this, on paper, and opened five ports to European trade; but the concession was grudgingly accorded in theory and as often as possible evaded in practice, and it was only the vigour and alertness of a few able consular officers that prevented the Treaty becoming wholly inoperative. Evasion and obstruction still from time to time frustrated their efforts, especially at Canton, and it was felt that, so long as the rights and liberties of foreigners at the Treaty ports depended upon the characters and caprices of mere local mandarins, there could be no uniformity of treatment and no security of justice. The wisest heads in Anglo-China agreed that until there was a Minister at Peking in touch with the Imperial Government there could be neither safety nor common tranquillity at the ports. The Second China War, with its sequel the Peiho Expedition of

1860, ended in the establishment of European Legations at the capital, and it was considered that the main difficulty of intercourse with China was at length surmounted. Forty years passed, during which the Plenipotentiaries gradually realised that the Board of Foreign Affairs at Peking was even less amenable to reason than the local officials of the earlier system; and finally, in 1900, the foreign Legations found themselves besieged by a furious soldiery whose violence was not only unchecked but was evidently stimulated by the Imperial Government itself. For a month of suspense, which seemed an eternity of apprehension, it was almost believed that half a century of humanizing influence at the Chinese capital had been sealed by the blood of every European in Peking.

The mistake which we made in 1842 in not insisting upon full diplomatic representation; the mistake we repeated in 1858 in retiring before the provisions of the Treaty of Tien-tsin were seen to be carried out; and again in 1860 in allowing the audience of the Emperor to be waived and a series of consequent indignities to be incurred—all these, the fruit of that timid vacillation of the British Government which forms its only 'continuity of policy' in the Far East, drew upon us the contempt of the astute statesmen of China, and brought upon our heads the imminent tragedy of 1900. In April 1901 it looks as if all previous mistakes were to be eclipsed by a fresh colossal blunder in withdrawing the forces of Europe before anything has been accomplished towards the removal of the causes of disorder. That the Powers should have joined together in an occupation of Peking, only to quarrel amongst themselves and retire lest

worse should happen, would be indeed a fiasco that would justify the contempt of the 'outer barbarian' that still prevails in official China.

Official China is the root of the difficulty, and the only hope for the country is that the official element shall be changed. 'Poor China,' wrote Sir Harry Parkes, just forty years ago, 'I do not doubt that the country, if left to itself, will recover. It is now in the position of a diseased man whose whole system has to be cleared by violent remedies: they tear him and leave him prostrate; but then there is a reaction, which, if not checked, leads to recovery.' At that time there was a situation not unlike what we see now. Peking had been in the hands of the allied armies, English and French; the Emperor was in the hands of a corrupt, savage, and violently anti-foreign clique. Then came a ray of hope. The Emperor died; the Empress took the reins in her hands; the anti-foreign party was dismissed or executed, and the fair-minded Prince of Kung was placed in power in the regency. 'These events,' wrote Parkes again, 'augur well for the future of China. I am sure that they will infuse new vigour into the provincial authorities, if, at least, they see that the Prince of Kung proves equal to the situation, and with new vigour and less corruption we yet may see peace and order return to this poor torn country.' But the Prince of Kung did not prove equal to the situation; if there was slightly more vigour there was no less corruption; and the Empress Regent, in whom Parkes saw a 'noble woman' in her early years of spirited policy, has not proved superior to the evil influence of the cleverest and most unscrupulous intriguer in all China, his Excellency Li Hung-

Chang. The country was 'left to itself,' to its inherent official corruption and misgovernment, and it did not recover. But then no 'violent remedies' were administered.

The question is now whether the time has not arrived when violent remedies should be drastically applied. China can never recover, can never restore order in place of rebellion, or toleration instead of fanaticism, so long as the present official caste remains what it has been. The mandarin, with his spurious education, his intolerable conceit of himself, his ignorant prejudices, and unfathomable corruption, has been the curse of China; and if she is to have any future worth considering, if she is to hold her own against the force that presses upon her from the North, she must get rid of the mandarin. The hopes of 1861 were illusory, because the times were not ripe and the people were not ready. The hope, faint as it is, of 1901 rests on a broader base. 'Never before has there been anything seen in China as nearly approaching what would be called in western countries an outburst of popular feeling.' So wrote on April 7th the *Times* Correspondent at Peking, in reference to the pressure brought to bear upon the Chinese Government to secure the rejection of the Convention with Russia in regard to Manchuria; and those who have read his letters know that this correspondent is one of the acutest observers in China. 'The public meetings held in many important centres, the letters of protest to the Chinese newspapers, the telegrams addressed direct to the Emperor, constitute a manifestation more unprecedented even than the outspoken language of the great Viceroy, who did not shrink from challenging the

authority of the Throne if it should sanction the Convention.' 'The rejection of this dangerous instrument,' he continues, 'certainly seems to represent a genuine uprising of progressive Chinese elements against the party of reaction and Manchu ascendancy, which since the *coup d'état* of 1898 has been solid for Russia.'

The spirited action of the great Yang-tsze Viceroys is one of the encouraging signs, but, in spite of the stifling influence of the mandarin system, there have always been exceptions to the stereotyped model, men of wisdom and uprightness, though few and rare. But the arousing of popular sentiment in widely separated parts of the vast heterogeneous empire is absolutely novel, and introduces an unexpected force of which much may be made by prudent statesmen. That such statesmen exist among the reformers who have lately been hunted like wild beasts, and driven from the shores of China like the plague, seems more than probable. Those who know them and have talked with them report highly of their integrity, patriotism, and intellectual ability. They are all for progress, and the chief danger appears to be lest their ardour should carry them too fast. It would be premature to hold very sanguine views as yet about the possible consequences if these men were given fair play. Appearances are nowhere more deceptive than in China, but it is right to remember that in the masses of the people there is excellent material for almost any work that may have to be done. Our quarrel for sixty years past has been with the officials, sometimes with the riff-raff of the gutters, but never with the people—one of the kindest, most peaceable, contented, and industrious folk upon the face of the earth. If the reformers

possess the virtues of the people, joined to an administrative capacity that only needs training, there is yet hope for the 'sick man' of the Far East; and if the Powers that are at present wrangling over their petty 'interests' at Peking, like curs over a bone, leave China without a solitary effort to place her Government in the hands of honest men, it will be one more disgrace to Christendom.

One of these reformers, a man who has held high office and knows Europe, remarked to a friend that Sir Harry Parkes was 'the only European who ever thoroughly understood the Chinese.' The opinion was the more remarkable because Parkes is commonly associated with a high-handed policy and a Palmerstonian method. The mistake is to assume that a firm and even menacing diplomacy is inconsistent with genuine goodwill towards the people. Parkes waged war, successful war, against the mandarins, and won more victories than any other European had ever dreamt of in China; but for the people he had only sympathy and compassion. The history of his career epitomizes the long struggle with official obstruction and perfidy, and continually brings to light the inherent good qualities of the Chinese people. No one can thoroughly understand the present complication who has not studied the successive phases of consular and diplomatic energy—and lassitude—since Great Britain first came into official relations with China in 1833; and there is no better way of studying this history than in the lives of the chief actors. One such authority, of the most vivid interest, is the life of Sir Rutherford Alcock, recently chronicled with great vigour and insight by that experienced observer of China, Mr

Alexander Michie, whose pithy comments are more than once quoted in the following pages. Another, of no less authority and even wider range is the career of Sir Harry Parkes, who was present in 1842 at the signing of the first European Treaty ever made with China, served through all the grades of the consular service at four of the five Treaty Ports then open to foreigners, and ended his life as Minister-Plenipotentiary at Peking only sixteen years ago. So instructive is all that Parkes did or wrote in relation to China that it is believed that an account of his life, in a briefer and more concise form than the two-volume biography written in 1894 by myself, in collaboration (for the Japanese chapters) with Mr F. Victor Dickins, C.B., will be found to be not only a record of a singularly brilliant career, but in a way a handbook to the China Question. Read in conjunction with Mr Michie's *Englishman in China*, there is very little in the history of British relations with the Celestial Empire that will not be found to be illustrated by the life-work of these two conspicuous figures in the diplomatic contests of the Far East. Those who wish to make a more detailed study will still refer to the larger biography of Sir Harry Parkes, where the letters and dispatches and references to authorities will be found which are necessarily omitted in the present volume, as well as Mr Dickins's learned and penetrating analysis of the revolution in Japan; but the essential facts are here, and the words and deeds of an eminent public servant who spent the best part of half a century in China and Japan must supply valuable suggestions to all who are preoccupied with the supreme problem of the Far East. At Hongkong and Shanghai, at least,

the name of Sir Harry Parkes is still a household word for single-hearted devotion and unflinching courage and resolution, and many have been the useless but significant wishes that he were still in his old place to watch over the interests both of England and of China.

S. L.-P.

TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN

9 April 1901

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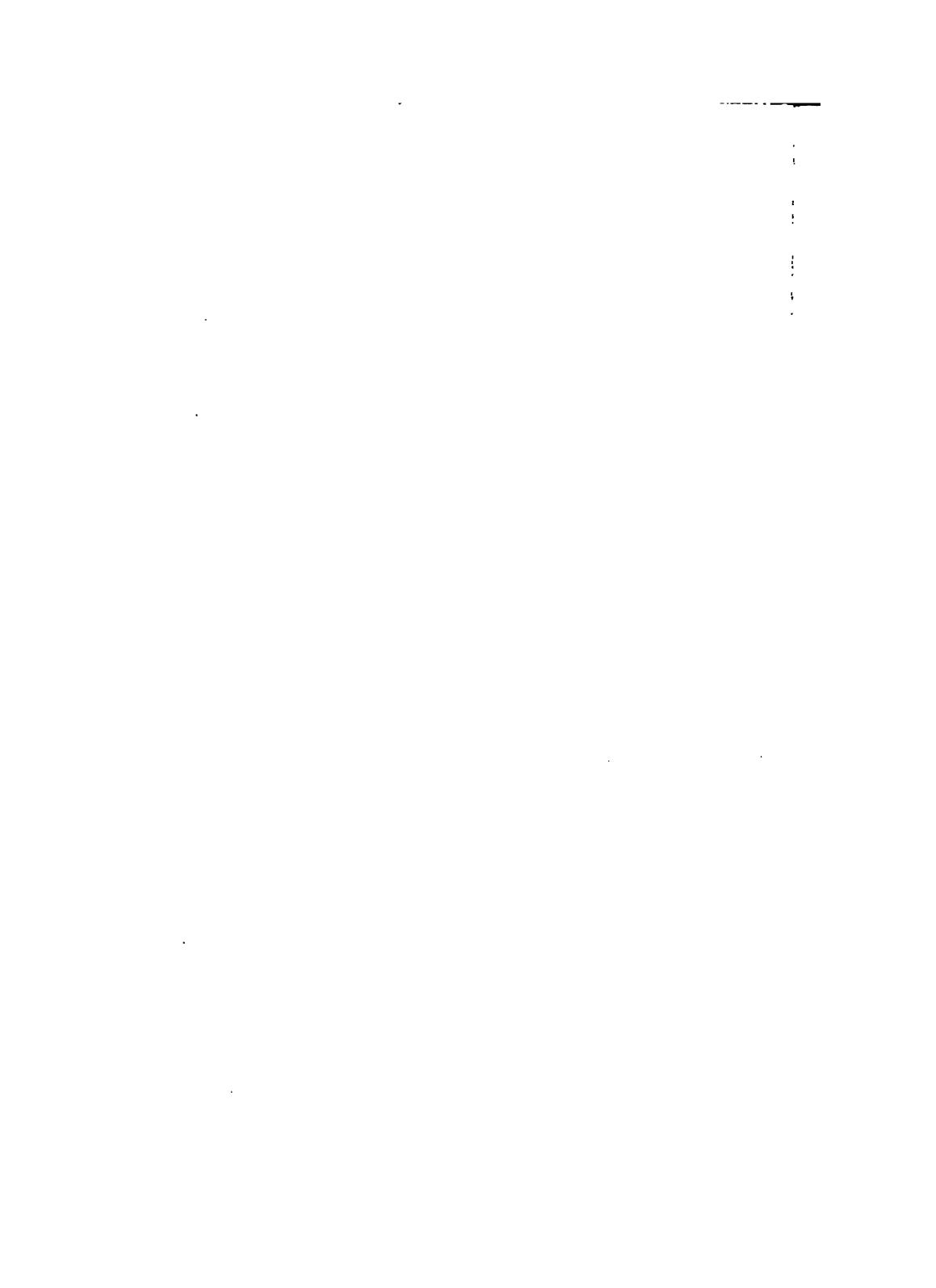
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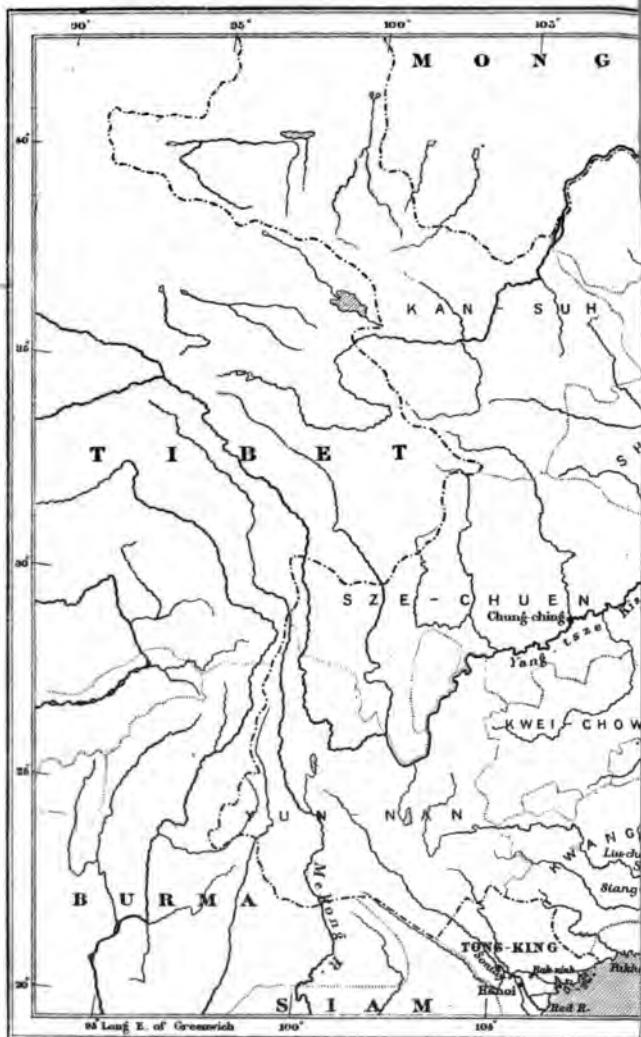
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SIR HARRY PARKES IN CHINA

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST CHINA WAR

1828-1842

ON the 20th of August 1842, the old capital of the Ming Empire was the scene of a ceremony which had no precedent in the immemorial annals of China. Before the long walls of Nanking an English army was preparing for the assault; on the broad waters of the Yang-tsze Kiang more than seventy British men-of-war and transports were drawn up for the bombardment; and, if diplomacy not war could do the work, Sir Henry Pottinger was there to conclude a Treaty which should put the relations of England and China on a proper footing. The Chinese, as it proved, had seen enough of English ships and guns, at Chapu, Woosung, and Chinkiang; and Imperial Commissioners had at last condescended to come to Nanking armed with full powers from the Son of Heaven to treat for peace. For the first time in the history of China, a treaty of defeat was to be concluded with the 'outer barbarians,' and insults were to give place (on paper) to international toleration. This it was that made the first ceremonious interchange of courtesies so memorable an event. The Chinese

Commissioners were received in state on board the flagship *Cornwallis* by Her Majesty's Plenipotentiary, supported by Admiral and General. The deck was ablaze with officers in full-dress uniforms; the marines presented arms; the band played, as the three mandarins set foot for the first time on a British man-of-war.

In the midst of this pomp and pageantry of court and war, a slim fair-haired boy with eager young face and vivid blue eyes was formally presented to the Imperial Commissioners. It was thus that Harry Parkes took his place at the age of fourteen in a great historic scene. From this day for more than forty years there were few events in the history of British relations with the Far East in which he did not play a conspicuous part; till the lad who carried dispatches for Sir Henry Pottinger at Nanking in 1842 ended his busy and eventful life in 1885 as Her Majesty's Minister to the Court of Peking.

At the time of the Treaty of Nanking, Harry Parkes was employed in the office of J. R. Morrison, the Chinese Secretary to the Plenipotentiary, and was studying Chinese with a view to an interpreter's appointment. Those were not the days of competitive examinations, or it is probable that England might have been deprived of one of the most distinguished of her public servants in the East. A boy who went out to China at the age of thirteen could not have enjoyed many opportunities for acquiring the varied accomplishments of a modern student-interpreter, but it may be doubted whether he did not gain more than he lost by his premature initiation into public affairs. The man of action is seldom a man of grammars, and Harry Parkes belonged

essentially to the class of men of action—the men who made the Indian Empire and planted the colonies of England over the face of the globe. To such natures, action and responsibility are the breath of life, and no competitive examination has yet been invented which will discover their incomparable qualities.

The boy of thirteen was drawn into a career in China by a chain of circumstances in which he had no voice or option. Harry Smith Parkes was born on the 24th of February 1828 at Birchills Hall in the parish of Bloxwich, near Walsall. His grandfather, the Rev. John Parkes, held a cure at Halesowen on the borders of Stafford and Worcestershire, and married a daughter of the Rev. William Boraston of Wolverley, by whom he had two sons:—John, who became a lieutenant in the Navy, and Harry, who, after working for some years in a bank at Wolverhampton, founded a firm of ironmasters. Harry the ironmaster, father of Harry the consul, is described as a man of an energetic and self-reliant character, as might indeed be expected in a bank clerk who ventured to throw up his post and plunge into the difficulties and risks of a large iron business. He married in 1821 the daughter of George Gitton, the first printer in the old border borough of Bridgnorth, and of their three children Harry was the youngest. Unhappily both parents died within a year in 1832-3.

The three orphan children were cared for at Birmingham by their father's only brother, who had then retired from the Navy; and when he too died in 1837, the boy was placed at King Edward's School, while his sisters joined a cousin who had married the Rev. Charles Gutzlaff, one of the secretaries to the

'Chief Superintendant of Trade,' as the highest English official in China was called. Mrs Gutzlaff was living in a large Portuguese house in the quaint old-world colony of Macao,—then the only European settlement on the coast of China,—when her cousins joined her in her philanthropic work among the Chinese children.

It was a strange time for two young girls to begin life in China. It was rather a question whether any European could live there at all. The transfer of the protection of British interests from the East India Company to the Crown at the close of 1833 had brought about a new and menacing stage in the relations between Chinese and foreigners. The East India merchants had uniformly been kept by the Chinese in that position of inferiority which it has ever been the persistent aim of official arrogance to force upon the people whom they contemptuously term 'foreign devils' or 'outer barbarians.' Whether it was but a savage repulsion to strangers, or the result of some centuries' experience of our predecessors, the Spaniards, Portuguese, Dutch,—of Catholic propaganda and futile embassies,—the English reaped the full harvest of humiliation. The Company's agents were allowed to address the local Chinese authorities only at Canton, and were not suffered to plant their foot on any other spot of all the spacious soil of China; and even at Canton they were compelled to approach the mandarins only in the form of a humble 'petition,' communicated 'with reverence' through the medium of the body of native traders known as the Hong merchants. They had no *locus standi* as Englishmen: they were merely admitted to trade on sufferance by the good offices of

their Chinese customers of the Hong, who, to do them justice, were honest and peaceable folk.

Such a state of things was perfectly in accord with Chinese policy: it secured the trade which was fully appreciated by the people; it preserved the attitude of contemptuous superiority and exclusiveness which the Chinese authorities have ever sought to maintain inviolate in face of all other nations; and it allowed them to pursue unchecked the course of contumely towards foreigners which has been their consistent policy for a century and a half. It was the sort of treatment which our East India factors had to suffer at the hands of Mogul governors before the days of Clive. To the managers of a trading company, more tenacious of profits than of self-respect, such relations might for a time be endurable, but it was not a possible position for a representative of the Crown. Accordingly when Lord Napier came out in 1834 as Chief Superintendent of Trade, with a rank almost corresponding with that of a Minister Plenipotentiary, he took up a totally different attitude. He was instructed by Lord Palmerston to deliver his letters of credence,—in the most conciliatory manner, it is true,—to the Viceroy at Canton, and to endeavour even to open up communications direct with the Court at Peking—so little did the Home Government then and for many years afterwards realize the invincible repugnance of the Chinese Emperor to recognize the very existence of other sovereigns. Accordingly to Canton Lord Napier went, and requested the interview with the local governor which every precedent in every civilized community prescribed for the reception of the envoy of a friendly foreign Power. The result is well known.

His letter was rejected, and he was insulted and literally harassed to death by the Chinese authorities.

After this, pending the long delay then involved in a reference to England, matters returned to their old position, and trade was resumed on the former humiliating conditions. The merchants carried on their business through the Hoppo (or farmer of the customs) and the Hong merchants, and Sir George Robinson, who succeeded Lord Napier, was unable to obtain the smallest consideration from the official authorities. When he remonstrated in his most deferential tone upon the plundering of a British vessel and the imprisonment of her crew, his complaint was flouted with contempt. The Chinese had so far succeeded in getting their own way and keeping the foreigner at arm's length, and the foreigner had consequently to put up with every sort of affront. Nor were matters in the least improved when Captain Elliot took over the post of Chief Superintendent in 1837. He was indeed allowed by the Chinese to reside in the foreign settlement, called (as in the old Company's days) the 'Factories,' at Canton, but merely with a view to keeping order among the British sailors and merchants; he was permitted no access to the local authorities, and was treated pretty much as a supercargo. It was during Captain Elliot's tenure of office that the celebrated Commissioner Lin arrived upon the scene. He was specially appointed by the Emperor in January 1839 to report upon the strained position of affairs at Canton, where trade had been twice suspended and twice timidly resumed, and he was instructed to suppress the traffic in opium.

The opium trade has been a vexed question for over

half a century, and opinions in England are as sharply divided on the subject as ever. Yet the facts are simple enough. Opium smoking is an ingrained habit of the Chinese people, and was in use long before the East India Company came into existence. In the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries opium was a recognized import in Chinese tariffs. In 1799 the drain of silver from the country in payment for foreign imports alarmed the Chinese Government, and the principal article of trade, opium, was prohibited, not because it was injurious in itself, but because (the balance of trade being against China) it took away too much specie. The decree, however, remained a dead letter for forty years; the trade went on just as though no such prohibition had ever been issued, and it went on with the full approval of the Chinese themselves. 'It has been a confusion of terms,' wrote Captain Elliot to the Foreign Office, 'to call the opium trade a smuggling trade; it was a formally prohibited trade, but there was no part of the trade of this country which had the more active support of the local authorities. It commenced and has subsisted by means of the hearty connivance of the mandarins, and it could have done neither without their constant countenance.' The people liked opium, the Chinese officials liked opium, large crops of the poppy were grown in China, and costly cargoes of 'foreign mud' were cheerfully imported from India. Opium was no more forced upon China than brandy upon England; nor have the Chinese authorities ever charged us with forcing it upon them. They even proposed (in 1837) to re-legalize the opium trade in the hope of checking the drain of silver,—proof enough that the difficulty was

one of finance, not of morals ; and up to the moment of Lin's arrival it was fully expected that the trade would be officially recognized.

The expectation was rudely dispelled. The new Commissioner ignored the Queen's representative, and addressed himself directly to the foreign merchants, requiring 'every particle of opium' to be surrendered. He adduced the loss of silver by exportation as the ground of his 'commands,' and by way of enforcing them blockaded the foreign factories at Canton, took away the native servants, and cut off supplies. Within the factories Capt. Elliot, the representative of the Queen, was 'forcibly detained, together with all the merchants of my own and other foreign nations settled here, without supplies of food, deprived of our servants, and cut off from all intercourse with our respective countries'; and in this duress 'constrained by paramount motives affecting the safety of the lives and liberty of all the foreigners,' he ordered the British merchants to surrender the opium, on the understanding that he and his countrymen would then be set at liberty. Over 20,000 chests, valued at two million pounds sterling, were accordingly surrendered, under threats of death; nevertheless Captain Elliot was not set free until he had suffered a captivity of seven weeks.

It soon became manifest that a nominal suppression of the opium trade—none knew better than he that it could never be real—was but a fraction of Lin's policy : he aimed at the total expulsion of Europeans from China and the closing of all foreign trade. He even claimed the intolerable right to arrest and punish British subjects—with capital punishment—by Chinese

law, without reference to their representative ; and on their taking refuge in the Portuguese settlement of Macao, he pursued at the head of 2000 troops. The Portuguese governor made no attempt to protect his guests. Elliot moved to the barren and almost uninhabited island of Hongkong, and the English took refuge in the ships in the harbour. Even there Lin's hostility followed them. British subjects who landed to buy provisions were liable to be shot ; Englishmen were captured, wounded, and killed ; and the wells of Hongkong were poisoned. Finally, when two British men-of-war off Chuen-pi refused to be threatened by twenty-nine war-junks, and summarily dispersed or sank them, Lin declared all trade with England at an end, and called upon every British subject to quit the country for ever.

The English Superintendent had stretched every point in order to conciliate the Chinese Commissioner. He was an old servant of the Company and had inherited an humiliating tradition. No one could have abased himself, fearless and gallant seaman as he was, more utterly or with less result. He had ordered the surrender of the opium ; he had repressed all but the mildest remonstrances when he and his fellow-subjects were exposed to gross insult and violence ; he had endured an unprovoked captivity ; and so far from retaliating he had gone out of his way to meet Lin's views on the opium traffic in a wholly supererogatory degree. He had protested that 'the flag of his country did not fly in the protection of a traffic declared to be unlawful by the great Emperor,' in refutation of a charge that had never been made ; and he went so far as even to proffer the assistance of

his officers in searching vessels suspected of opium cargoes, and to promise his official sanction to the confiscation of such cargoes and the expulsion of the offending merchants from the country. In fact he was ready to play the exciseman and police officer in their behoof. Conciliation could no further go, and it was rewarded as conciliation always is rewarded in China, where it is invariably translated by fear. The olive branch was trampled in the mud of Hog Lane, and, the resources of humiliation being exhausted, the foreigner was banished from the land.

‘The first representatives of the British Crown in China,’ it has been well remarked,* ‘were doomed to failure by the nature of their commission. The terms of their instructions were more than contradictory,—they were mutually destructive. To conciliate the Chinese while opening official relations with them was to mix the ingredients of an explosive. A dilemma was, in fact, presented unwittingly by the British Government to their agents. Lord Napier impaled himself on one horn—that of claiming a diplomatic status; Captain Elliot on the other—that of gaining over the government by conciliation; and no earthly skill could have saved either of them.’

Lin’s magnificent Sentence of Banishment amounted of course to a Declaration of War. The only alternative was to accept our dismissal humbly and leave China alone for all time. The possibility of the latter policy has been argued, but the discussion is purely academic. There is no reason in the abstract why a nation should not shut itself up within its borders, draw in its limbs and head like a tortoise, and decline

* A. Michie, *The Englishman in China*, i. 92.

to be disturbed by the outside world ; but in practice such isolation is impossible. Had it been attempted, the needs both of the Chinese and of the English would have soon broken down the artificial barrier, and an unauthorized trade would have led to worse difficulties. Trade was there before any European government had official relations with China, and trade would go on between the people of the two countries, whatever efforts governments might make to suppress it. But if it had to go on, it must be under such conditions as a European power could accept without dis-honour and English merchants without jeopardy. Therefore Commissioner Lin's proclamation was taken as a declaration of war, and England sent out a fleet and an army to enforce proper treatment of her representatives and subjects at the hands of the Chinese.

Thus war was declared by the Chinese on the 6th December 1839, not because England insisted on 'forcing' opium upon the innocent natives, but because China resolved to rid herself for ever, 'bag and baggage,' of the hated 'barbarian.' The history of our official relations with China during the past sixty years has been one long incessant struggle to induce the Chinese Government to set aside the artificial barriers it has sought to set up between the legitimate commercial necessities of the two nations.

When the commands of Commissioner Lin were carried out by the deferential Portuguese, and the Chinese servants deserted and supplies of food were cut off at Macao, Mrs Gutzlaff and her cousins, like

other English families, had to take refuge on the ships which lay in Hongkong harbour. Early in 1840, however, they were all back at Macao, awaiting the arrival of the British Expedition which was coming to put matters on a less unsatisfactory basis. Fifteen men-of-war and 4000 troops arrived in June, and the presence of the British forces seeming to promise a more settled state of things in China, the two sisters sent for their young brother from England. Harry Parkes sailed from Portsmouth in the *Foam* on the 13th June 1841, and reached Macao on the 8th October. Here he not only found two homes,—for his elder sister was now married to Mr Lockhart, the well-known medical missionary,—but also a career. John Robert Morrison, Secretary to the Chief Superintendent and one of the most brilliant of our early Chinese linguists, was ready to welcome him into the Government service. 'We are sadly in want of interpreters,' he wrote, 'and the moment he can speak a little Chinese we shall be right glad to have his services.'

Meanwhile a great deal was happening in China. Since the arrival of the British Expedition, the forts which guard the approach to Canton had been taken, and the city itself lay under the guns of the English fleet—to be released unsubdued, a mistaken act of generosity for which England afterwards had to pay dearly. Demonstrations along the coast and the temporary occupation of the island of Chusan had alarmed the Chinese Government, but had not conquered its obstinate refusal to admit the foreigner upon terms of equality; repeated efforts to communicate direct with the Court had been ignominiously repelled; and a Treaty arranged at Canton had been repudiated

at Peking. The only permanent result had been the acquisition of Hongkong by Great Britain. When Sir Henry Pottinger arrived in August 1841 as Plenipotentiary to the Chinese Court, he found matters in this anomalous position:—Trade had been resumed at Canton, but the Emperor at Peking remained inconquerably hostile; a troubled sort of truce had been patched up in the South, whilst in the North there was nothing but hostility at headquarters. It was obvious that such a state of things promised no security for British interests, and Sir Henry sailed for the North. Amoy and Ningpo were taken and garrisoned, Chusan was again occupied, and when this exhibition of force produced no apparent impression, Pottinger resolved to come to close quarters with the central authorities. It was no use attacking the enemy's limbs: he must strike at his head. Next to forcing his way to Peking itself—which would have been the most decisive of all possible methods—an advance up the Yang-tsze Kiang to the sacred city of Nanking offered the best means of showing the Chinese that we were able to enforce our demands. The Great River would permit our ships-of-war to do execution on the forts and cities on the way up; the mastery of the Grand Canal would control the rice supply of Peking; and nothing, short of a voyage up the Peiho, could have a more striking effect on the Chinese Government than a water-invasion of Nanking. Accordingly to Nanking Sir Henry Pottinger resolved to go, and Admiral Sir William Parker received his orders to sail for the Yang-tsze with his battleships and transports. The progress of the war may seem slow, but two facts have to be remembered: first, the desire of the English Government to give the

affairs ever to take up the threads of a classical education. In later years it was a constant subject for regret with him that he never could find time to master studies for which he had both the will and the ability.

The round of work in the house was enlivened by a swim in the sea and a gallop on Morrison's pony, on whose back Parkes learned the delight in riding which he retained to his last days. If he never became an accomplished horseman, few men in an official career have spent more hours on horseback and enjoyed them more thoroughly. On other days he sailed in the harbour, or climbed Mount Victoria, where people now live in charming bungalows during the hot season, but where in 1842 there was nothing but bushes and grass, up which he crawled on all fours to be rewarded with a gorgeous view of the whole island and the encircling sea. In a boyish journal he describes a picnic in 'a beautiful wood, where deers are and pheasants. Here in a suitable place we sat down to rest, and the coolies, who got chairs and tables from the village, spread out under the shade a good and substantial repast. We all made a good breakfast, for we were hungry after having had five hours' stiff walking. We were also very dirty, for the dews of the morning had stuck the dirt to our clothes. Well, we ate heartily of pigeon pie, cold fowls, cold beef, eggs, lichee, plums, biscuits, bread, porter, cold tea and hot tea, cheese, salt, etc. etc. etc. Our companions were very nice people indeed. One, Captain Keppel of the *Dido*, a most beautiful little frigate, which is going up to Chusan directly with transports, offered me a passage in her; but as the *Blenheim* will certainly be going soon I could not accept the offer, but I was much obliged to him for his kindness.'

He was evidently a nice boy, or Captain Keppel

would not have asked him to join him in his frigate. The Captain, now Admiral of the Fleet Sir Harry Keppel, it need hardly be said, was one of the most brilliant naval officers of the day, and to be chosen by him was no small honour.

The harbour of Hongkong was a busy place in June 1842. Troopships were coming in fast, to be convoyed away North by men-of-war. On the 2nd the *Belleisle* came in with the 98th Regiment, Colin Campbell's, and one of the officers of the 98th was Lieut. T. F. Wade, with whom Parkes and China had much to do during the next forty years. None could have foreseen in the boy looking down into the harbour on that 2nd of June, and the young officer who was to go North on the *Belleisle*, two future Ministers of the Queen at the Court of the Emperor of China. Strangers as yet to each other, the two became fast friends for life; but at the moment nothing could have appeared less probable than that the clerk in the Chinese Secretary's office and the lieutenant in the 98th should find themselves successively masters of the British Legation at Peking.

CHAPTER II

UP THE YANG-TSZE

1842

AT last the time of waiting was over, and on the 6th of June, H.M.S. *Queen* sailed for the seat of war, carrying Sir Henry Pottinger, Morrison, and the rest of the staff, among whom, in an undefined position, was Harry Parkes. The fleet had preceded them, and had left its marks in the ruins of Amoy, whilst the unburied dead lay within the batteries of Woosung, where the Chinese had offered a stubborn resistance. Shanghai had suffered little, and the boy, who landed wherever he had the chance, was astonished at the labyrinth of streets in the first real Chinese city he had seen, small as it was then compared with the rich metropolis of merchants which he governed as consul twenty years later. From Shanghai the whole fleet slowly forged its way up the shallows and sand-banks of the Great River. The ships drew more water than was convenient, and one or other of the larger vessels, the *Belleisle* or the *Cornwallis*, was continually running aground or demanding to be towed, so that thirty miles a day was sometimes all they made. Around these clumsy tubs skimmed the beautiful little iron steamer, the *Nemesis*, which had done wonders in the Canton river under Commander

Hall, and was now almost knocked to pieces by hard service. There were frequent landings on the flat fertile banks of the broad river, and Parkes came in for his share as 'general utility' boy, cutting wood, or chaffering with the market folk for provisions. He was often sent ashore to forage for food, and in spite of a very limited familiarity with the spoken dialects no one, it was said, could manage to get so many bullocks out of coy vendors as the youthful volunteer of the Commissariat. It has always been one of the oddities of our wars in China that the people were friendly and willing to supply provisions to the very army that was invading their country; the large Chinese population at Hongkong had cordially helped in fitting out the Expedition; but the oddity was at its height when the supplies were obtained by the energetic arguments in broken Chinese of a boy of fourteen who did not even belong to the army, and had but an extremely indefinite connection with the expedition. It was an excellent training for the future interpreter, however, and his forays ashore, coupled with hard drudgery at Chinese lessons on board, in the intervals of more active work, soon gave him a fair degree of fluency in speaking. His cousin by marriage, whom he always called 'uncle' Gutzlaff, had joined him at Shanghai, and kept him steadily at his studies, despite the attractions of a new country and the excitement of junk-catching, and the boy was quite old enough to realize that his future career depended upon his acquiring a good working knowledge of Chinese in the quickest possible time. Still, the journal which he kept during the voyage shows that he was often indulged in his longing for active employment. On

the 17th of July they passed Tsien Shan, and saw the golden ball of the Emperor's pavilion just rising above the trees; the yellow roofs of the 'Golden Island,' beautiful Kin Shan, shone six miles away, and the walls of Chinkiang stood out in the distance. Lying at anchor just above Kin Shan at daybreak of the 18th they saw a number of junks trying to slip by. Shots were fired, but the junks declined to heave to, and the *Queen* accordingly got up steam and went in pursuit:—

'All hands were piped to quarters, bulwarks taken down, and all necessary preparations made for fighting. The junks knowing the passage got on at first better than we did, for we stuck once, but not for long: and about breakfast came up with an immense number lying at anchor off Iching. These we captured, and then proceeded after some others which had gone on: these we also captured one by one, after a good deal of firing. . . . Also we captured a beautiful little junk which Major Malcolm took possession of, and having got an officer and ten men to sail her, went all about through the junks, telling them to get under weigh and go back to Kin Shan again. I also offered myself as a volunteer, and being accepted, enjoyed myself very much. Every junk, amounting in all to nearly 300, we went on board of, examining their cargoes; and those that were in any wise obstreperous, we cut their moorings and set them adrift. Most of them were either partly or quite empty, but others had salt and coal in great quantities.'

The next day, 19th July, there was another exploring party up the creeks, accompanied by junk-catching, and of course Harry was in the thick of it, and jubilant over the fun:—

'I immediately dressed myself to get into the cutter, but just as she was shoving off, she was ordered to

proceed in chase of a junk that would not heave to: so off we set. The junk sailed very fast, and we could hardly keep up with her, but as we rowed as well as [sailed] we gained upon her, and when quite near fired into her several times; but she would not stop, and we actually had to board her by force. We immediately proceeded to cut away the masts, toss the sails overboard, and cut her up so that she could not move.'

These expeditions were of course made with the view of finding out the enemy's strength and positions. They could see that reinforcements had reached Chinkiang, where the decisive action of the war was to be fought. On the 20th all was arranged for the attack, and Harry records in his journal, 'I went to bed in very good spirits, full of anticipations of what I should see to-morrow, as Sir Henry has promised to let me go with him, not to the fight, but to see it from the distance.'

Thursday 21st July.—At five o'clock this morning the troops began to land at the N.-W. end of the suburbs of Chinkiang, and at about half-past seven I landed with Sir Henry, Mr Morrison, and Dr Woosnam, with eight seamen and two marines. I have never seen such a busy scene before as that of landing troops. There they were, all muddled up together, officers running backwards and forwards, men shouting and looking for their comrades, etc. etc. etc. We chose for our position the summit of a hill which overlooked the city and the country all round, and at about two miles from the city. It was a very beautiful view to see the soldiers forming and beginning to wind through the defiles and over the tops of the hills to their destined positions in which they were to begin the attack. We could also see an encampment a little to the eastward of the city in a very strong position.

the loss of the enemy there must have been very slight, as they only showed themselves through the embrasures, and with the exception of once, our men never had an opportunity of meeting them: however, when they did so, a terrible example was made of them and very few escaped.'

The day after the assault, Harry went on shore to see the city. It was on fire in several places, and the houses were in ruins: 'one was a pawnbroker's: I never saw such a scene. All the rooms were full of beautiful silks, embroidery, lacquer boxes, hats, chinaware, and almost everything of all descriptions, kicking about and being trod on and passed over even in the courtyard and street. Amongst them was a man who had hung himself.' It was discovered that 'several of the Tartar gentlemen have committed suicide, and that the Tartar General, when he found the city was taken, ordered all his valuables to be brought into the hall, sat himself down in the middle of them, and setting fire to them burnt himself alive.' His secretary, who was brought aboard, said that the enemy's force in the city had consisted of 3200 Tartars and 800 Chinese, and in the camp outside there were over 2000 Chinese.

Some days there was little wind, and the fleet could not move on; and meanwhile the heat was intense, and the nights sultry. Or else there was a head wind, which was pleasant enough, but did not conduce to progress. Several times the signal was made to weigh anchor, and as often it was annulled. Harry spent the interval of delay in visiting the old Imperial library, which had been discovered at Kin Shan:—

'Although the house was falling down, so that we durst hardly go upstairs, yet the books were in a

beautiful state, all packed and enclosed in camphor-wood cases, and having a quantity of camphor sprinkled amongst them. There were many thousand volumes, on all kinds of subjects. Amongst other things there was a collection of beautiful plates, evidently done by the French, representing the Tartars' victories over some of the north-west tribes. They were covered with yellow satin (as most of the books were) and beautifully preserved. The pictures themselves are full a yard square. There were also some Chinese plates representing the same kind of thing, very well done for the Chinese, but of course much inferior to the other ones. The priests had already taken a great quantity of the books away, but those proceedings were now stopped by a sentry being placed over them.'

At last on the morning of the 5th of August they could see a pagoda which was close to Nanking—doubtless the famous 'Porcelain Tower'—and at one o'clock they were up with the flagship, level with the southern capital of China.

'Nanking itself is three miles and a half inland, but it is surrounded by three walls. . . . Part of the outer wall faces the river at the distance of from 900 to 1000 yards from its banks. This wall the Chinese are fortifying and making strong again as fast as they can. Already they have got about half a dozen guns to bear upon the fleet, and that they may have time to finish it they are sending off a parcel of low brass-button mandarins with chops from the Governor-General of the Two Kiang, who is in the city, talking about entering into negotiations, and that Elepoo is coming to treat, etc. . . . It will be rather a hard struggle, especially with the Tartar garrison, who are in great strength, and this part of the city very strongly fortified. Two brass-buttoned mandarins, who were on board of us this afternoon, told me that there were 8000 Tartars, 6000 Chinese belonging to the place, 1000 Hu

Peh soldiers, and 1000 Kiang Si men, together with others who were fast collecting. This account, which is supposed to be underrated, is an immense force to encounter, with such strong defences to back them.'

In the event the 'chops' (dispatches) turned out to be more important than the defences. The taking of Chinkiang had evidently made a considerable impression on the Chinese, and they were unwilling to risk a similar disaster at Nanking. Elepoo and Kiying, both honest Manchus, the former deeply respected, and both men capable of grasping the situation and bold enough not to blink the facts to the Emperor himself, were sent to negotiate; but it is clear that even they were hardly prepared for the consequences of surrender. On Monday the 8th August the following instructive passage occurs in the journal:—

'In the afternoon Chang, a crystal-button mandarin, and Elepoo's slave, came off with a whole train of inferior mandarins, announcing his master's arrival, and inquiring about our terms. He was in a great rage at our saying that the Chinese must pay the expenses of the war, and on Mr Thom reminding him of some of their underhand practices, he absolutely struck at him. He was not treated then with so much familiarity. He stopped about an hour and then went away. He is a fine fellow and very handsomely dressed, with two splendid watches at his side.'

These feelers did not arrest the military preparations; for the least sign of hesitation would have at once restored confidence to the Chinese. Reconnaissances went on gaily, and the General said he should be ready to assault in three or four days. Firmness had its effect: on the 12th a transparent-blue-button mandarin came to announce the High Commissioners' arrival, and after several meetings between the inter-

preters and secretaries Morrison announced that peace was a certainty. There were no signs of hostility. Parkes mentions a walk 'for three miles into the country, oftentimes walking close by the walls of the city. Everything wears a peaceable aspect. Red flags were hung out of many of the people's houses, which they told us were meant to welcome our arrival—though the first words that they put to us were "When will you be going?"'

The eventful meeting between the Plenipotentiaries of England and China, took place on board the *Cornwallis* on August 20th. Parkes had the first of his many interviews with high Chinese officials on the *Medusa*, which was lying off a creek waiting to receive the High Commissioners and take them on board the *Cornwallis*.

'They had a great number of servants and attendants,' he wrote, 'together with many mandarins of both high and low rank, which so crowded the decks of the little *Medusa* that there was no passing or repassing. I was publicly introduced to their Excellencies by Mr Morrison, and Kiying, seeing that I was a regular "red-haired barbarian," took a bit of a fancy to me. I tried to talk as much as possible, but could only stammer out a few words, while I could not understand Kiying in the least, who speaks the northern mandarin very broadly. Neither Kiying nor Elepoo the High Commissioners, nor Niu-kien the Governor-General, were dressed finely. The two former were dressed plainer than anybody. I could not account for this at all, though I was told afterwards by Mr Morrison that the dress of a Chinese Commissioner is always very plain, because they are expected to go out from the Emperor with all possible speed and in their haste not to take any of their ornaments or finery with

them. I rather like Kiying's appearance, for he has a fine manly honest countenance, with pleasantness in his looks; but I cannot say the same of Elepoo or Niu-kien, for they look dull and heavy, with coarse features, which seemed to show that they were takers of opium, etc. Poor Elepoo has very sickly health. He is never well for long together, and the labour and anxiety which he has suffered since the arrival of our fleet off Nanking seem quite to have upset him.'

Harry had easily managed to be present at the reception of the Commissioners on the *Medusa*, but it needed some diplomacy to get on board the flagship for the chief ceremony — the first interview between the High Excellencies of China and the English leaders. He was told it was impossible — there was no room, and many mandarins had to be excluded. But he chanced to be holding in his hand some of Morrison's papers with the official yellow colour, and on brandishing these with a consequential air before the officer in charge of one of the boats, he was allowed to go, to his great delight, and so, 'very joyfully and laughing at them in my sleeve,' pulled through a heavy sea to the *Cornwallis*.

'On the quarter-deck and poop there was a splendid sight. An immense number of officers were assembled there, all in their full-dress uniforms, which made a very showy appearance. There was also a company of marines drawn up, together with a good band who struck up some very beautiful tunes. When I got on board the Commissioners and Niu-kien had been received by Sir Henry and the Admiral and General, and had been shown into the aftermost cabin. I then went there and had a beautiful place from where I could see and hear everything that went on. I was standing close by the Admiral and General, who gave me his terrible large cocked hat and feathers to put

down in some place for him. It was merely a visit of ceremony; no business matters were talked about. The Admiral had prepared in two rooms an elegant tiffin of sweetmeats, wines, and viands, and all kinds of delicacies. Almost everybody partook of them, which soon made a hole into most of the dishes. The Chinese showed their approbation of English fare this time also by the quantity that they demolished: but some of the common servants were very rude, and ate and drank to a degree, and even when ordered out in their own language snatched at the things still more voraciously and then laughed in your face. This was afterwards mentioned to Kiying, who was very angry about it. After sitting for some time they arose and were shown about the vessel. They expressed much surprise at its size and number of guns, and more still on being told that it was by no means one of our largest vessels. Soon after this they made their departure, evidently much gratified with their reception and the attention paid to them. They were saluted both at their arrival and departure with three guns.'

The return visit of the English authorities to the Commissioners was paid on the 24th at a temple a little way from the bank. Harry, after succeeding in planting his small self next to the General at the first interview on board the flagship, appears to have found his further attendance quite necessary to the due performance of all ceremonies with the Chinese. So far from opposing his wish, Sir Henry Pottinger laughingly answered some objection with the words 'He is my boy, and must come.' Accordingly Harry found himself walking with Gutzlaff to the temple on the morning of the 24th, to make sure that all was ready for the return visit.

'To get to the temple you have to go up the creek or rather canal some way, and then when you land you

have not to walk much above a hundred yards through a little dirty narrow street before you reach the temple. When we got there we found everything in readiness, and their Excellencies Kiying, Elepoo and Niu-kien waiting for the arrival of our party. In two large open courts, through which you have to pass before you come to the rooms of the temple, there were on each side drawn up single ranks of Chinese soldiers with flags etc., and at each corner there were a few miserable men playing pipes and beating gongs, which made an horrible noise. In two rooms there was a tiffin laid out of all kinds of sweetmeats, cakes, fruit, tea, etc. etc., with low-button mandarins to wait as servants, instead of those on board the *Cornwallis* the other day.

'We were received by the Commissioners in a very kind manner. Elepoo was better, but he still looked unwell. My uncle was soon in earnest conversation with them all. Kiying took me by the hand and seated me by him. I sat by him for full half an hour, during which time he had been amusing himself with me, and I had been amusing myself with the sweetmeats etc. which he gave me. . . .

'When Sir Henry with the Admiral and General had been conducted into the banquet room and seated (the room was decorated all over with hangings and pictures; also the seats were covered with worked silk cushions) the Chinese band struck up from all quarters, making the most dreadful din I think I have ever heard, and so to drown this horrible noise our band began to play some very beautiful tunes, which pleased their Excellencies Kiying, Elepoo, and Niu-kien very much. Kiying and Elepoo were dressed very plain indeed, but all the other mandarins were dressed much finer than usual. This being a ceremonial visit like the former one, there were no business matters talked of. . . . After sitting for about an hour, and everybody having taken what he wished, Sir Henry rose to depart. He was accompanied into the court by Kiying etc.,

where our band [the Royal Irish] struck up "God save the Queen." Everybody who was going away then stopped and took off their hats, and when it was finished then went on again.'

The events of the day were not over, however, when the Commissioners had gone home. There was some business to settle among the interpreters, and whilst Gutzlaff, Thom, and G. T. Lay settled it with the mandarins, Harry explored the temple and the idols by himself. A sumptuous dinner followed, given by the Chinese: 'There were a great number of dishes, which were changed for others almost immediately after they had been put upon the table. . . . I was not puzzled how to hold the chopsticks but was able to pick up anything; the dish that I preferred most was sharks' fins.' After dinner the party took to the boats, but instead of rowing to the *Queen*, 'Let us go to the Porcelain Tower,' said Gutzlaff, and thither they went, accompanied by Wu, the district magistrate. After skirting the walls for some distance on the canal, they landed and walked the half mile to the tower. It was eight o'clock at night, but still light, as Gutzlaff and Harry followed by some of the magistrate's servants hurried along, with Thom and Lay panting behind:—

'Upon coming near the tower I ran on first, and was the very first Englishman that ever visited the Porcelain Tower. In a very little time a large mob was collected round us, and also some police who had arrived with lighted torches, and when the people pressed upon us, beat them with these torches. . . . Though we had only lamps to see it by, yet it looked exceedingly well. All round the walls there are images moulded and gilt all over, and in the middle of each story there is a large idol, also gilt. This gilt is in an exceeding good state of preservation, and we found out afterwards

that it was mixed with oil, which accounts for its good-looking. The porcelain also looked exceedingly well, quite white ; most of the inside coating is all porcelain of a very fine nature. All round about it was ornamented with moulding and carving of the most fantastical and beautiful shapes, painted, etc. . . . There are nine stories with four windows in each story. The tower itself is a hexagon and about 250 feet high.'

They had an excellent supper with Wu in a neighbouring temple, where they were put up on good beds of China blankets, and returned next morning, taking a peep through the great gate of Nanking as they passed. Before the Expedition went away the Porcelain Tower was again visited, but in a very different manner. A party of soldiers and sailors, armed with chisels and hatchets, began to destroy the tiles and mouldings in the ruthless manner of their kind. Sir Henry Pottinger was very indignant at this gratuitous vandalism ; a guard was stationed to keep off intruders, and no one was thenceforth allowed to visit the tower without a permit from the Admiral or General. 'Such an act as this is shameful,' wrote Harry Parkes, 'and a disgrace to the British name. . . . Really some of the sailors and officers belonging to some of these transports are a lawless set of beings, and they may well be styled "barbarians" who could wantonly destroy a building of such celebrity.' But the worst barbarians, who utterly destroyed the famous Porcelain Tower, were the Tai Ping rebels of 1852.

On the 27th August the news arrived that the Emperor had approved the Treaty, and Monday the 29th was fixed for the signing and sealing. The *Cornwallis* was the scene of this final ceremony, and at noon Kiying and Niu-kien were received on the quarter-

deck to the strains of 'God Save the Queen.' Elepoo, who was ill, came rather later :—

'The poor old man . . . was so ill that he was carried up the side in a chair. He was met at the gangway by Sir Henry, the Admiral, and General, who partly carried and partly supported him into the after-cabin, where he was laid on a sofa; and that he might not be wearied too much, business matters were proceeded to immediately. Firstly the Treaty was sealed by Mr Morrison as secretary to Sir Henry on the one side, and by Wang Tajin as secretary to Kiying on the other. There was the seal of the Imperial High Commissioners and Sir Henry's seal. This being finished and done, the table was drawn up to the sofa, and then Kiying, Elepoo, and Niu-kien signed their names. I could not make anything out of the signatures at all (Mr Thom told me it was a particular mark, which each mandarin has, and not letters). Then Sir Henry did his. There were four copies of the Treaty signed and sealed. They were bound in worked yellow silk, one Treaty in English and the same in Chinese stitched and bound together formed a copy. This being finished they all came out of the after-cabin and sat down to tiffin, and the different officers seated themselves all round the table, making plenty of guests. Almost directly after the Treaty was signed, a yellow flag for China at the main and a Union Jack for England at the mizen were hoisted, and at the same time a royal salute of twenty-one guns was fired. Some of the mandarins went to see this done, but soon came running up again much frightened. Soon after this they took their leave. Each party seemed satisfied and pleased with each other.'

Thus was the Treaty of Nanking concluded. It provided for the security and protection of British subjects in China, who might 'carry on their mercantile pursuits without molestation or restraint at the cities and towns of Canton, Amoy, Foochowfoo, Ningpo, and Shanghai.'

not with the Hong merchants of Canton merely, but with 'whatever persons they please.' British consular officers were to be appointed 'to reside at each of the above-named cities or towns to be the medium of communication between the Chinese authorities and the said merchants,' and, what was of infinite importance, to protect British subjects in person and property, who were henceforward amenable only to the laws of England,—a provision which has justly been termed the palladium of the liberties of all nationalities in China. The island of Hongkong was ceded in perpetuity to the Crown of England, as a port where British ships might careen and stores be kept; and an indemnity of twenty-one million dollars was to be paid for the cost of the Expedition caused by 'the violent and unjust proceedings of the Chinese high authorities,' and for the opium destroyed by Commissioner Lin. Pending the payment of the indemnity, by instalments spread over three years, the islands of Koolangsoo and Chusan were to be held by Great Britain. Entire equality between the two Governments was assumed throughout the Treaty, and 'Her Britannic Majesty's Chief High Officer in China' was to 'correspond with the Chinese High Officers *both at the capital and in the provinces*,' not in the old humiliating form of a 'petition,' but by a 'communication.'

The Treaty of Nanking marked a vital change in our relations with China. For the first time in history the Chinese formally acknowledged themselves in the wrong and admitted their defeat by 'foreign devils' in a document of state. For the first time they consented to deal directly with England, as Power with Power, instead of treating her merchants as suppliants through a native commercial body at Canton. For the first time they

threw open five ports to the general commerce of England, and hence to the world at large, and admitted the rights of foreigners to the protection of their own laws. All this was a tremendous revolution in Chinese ideas, and hopeful spectators prophesied the breaking down of the old barriers of exclusiveness, and the opening up of the whole of the Flowery Land to the influences of European enterprise and civilization.

But the Treaty did not go far enough. It was perhaps impossible at that early stage to ask for more, yet there were statesmen who even then foresaw that unless England obtained the right of direct representation through a Minister at the Court of Peking, the advantages secured by the Treaty of Nanking might prove illusory. So long as British interests depended upon the temper of local officials, a door would be left open for humiliation and outrage. The right of communication with the capital turned out to be a dead letter, until enforced at the point of the bayonet eighteen years later. And until the capital could be entered, and the Emperor's ministers personally approached by a British representative, it was impossible (without force) to bring the arrogance of the provincial authorities to account. Moreover the chief provincial capital, Canton, the market with which hitherto and for a long time to come England had most to do, was left unsubdued. It had been unwisely spared, in the interests of trade, during the superintendency of Captain Elliot, and this 'misguided clemency,' as Mr Michie has truly said,* puffed up the arrogant Cantonese and 'left the populace of the city and district absolutely convinced of their invincibility. As the eradication

* *The Englishman in China*, i, 92.

of this dangerous delusion was among the primary purposes of the war, so the pandering to the pride of Canton proved, as was inevitable, the malignant root of all subsequent bitterness.' The right of entry into Canton, expressly provided by the Treaty, was never yielded to us by the Chinese until another war had chastened them ; and meanwhile, Canton remained the focus of that anti-foreign feeling which is characteristic of the whole governing class of China, from the Court at Peking to the petty provincial clerk. And if one provision of the Treaty could be defied, why not another? It must always be remembered that the government of China, from the Emperor downwards, were to a man opposed to every clause. They accepted the Treaty as a means of gaining time and staving off war, but they never had the smallest intention of observing it or of keeping faith with the 'barbarians' in any single respect. That it was observed at all was the result of strenuous vigilance and firmness on the part of some of the newly-appointed consular officers, who soon found that they had all their work cut out for them if the Chinese were to be held to their bargain. They were not long in discovering that in China a Treaty, unsupported by guns, is waste paper, and that Treaty rights had not only to be claimed but fought for.

Nevertheless the Treaty was a notable step in our intercourse with China, and if it did not open up the country, at least it greatly enlarged our points of touch with the people. It was but the beginning of a rational basis of relations, yet it was a wise and solid foundation on which to build. It is interesting to note that Harry Parkes, who did so much to broaden that foundation, was present at the laying of the first stone. All

our official relations with China date from the Treaty of 1842, and the man who passed through every stage of official life, from Interpreter to Minister Plenipotentiary, had the good fortune to be a witness when the curtain went up on the very first act in the drama in which he was to play so many parts. He was but a supernumerary then, though he was allowed to see almost as much of the action as the leaders; but he was on in every scene henceforth, and as he advanced his parts became more important, till at last he took the chief rôle, and died upon the stage. Nor is it easy to exaggerate the importance of the bearing of these early events upon his career. He was thrown from the first among the very leaders of the campaign, and his youthful charm of manner and willing energy of character won him a welcome beside the grave chiefs of war and diplomacy at the most critical moments of their work. To have been in such a position was a magnificent beginning for his career. Taken from school at an age when a lad has scarcely begun to measure his fellows, his education really opened on the decks of men-of-war, in the council chambers of plenipotentiaries, and on the field of battle. It speaks volumes for his character that he came through this strange experience unspoilt, a favourite with great and small, and, in spite of his premature entrance into the life of men of action, a humble natural boy, fully conscious of his own defects, and resolved to work hard to improve himself. Morrison wrote, on board the *Queen* that he 'continues the same good-dispositioned boy,' and 'Harry wins golden opinions.' He had the good fortune, too, to meet with a golden opportunity, and he made the most of it.

CHAPTER III

THE INTERPRETER

1842-1844

AFTER such great doings and great people, sieges and treaties, high commissioners and generals, the routine of a rural magistrate's office must have been not a little irksome. On leaving Nanking, Parkes, after paying his tribute to the climate by getting his first touch of China fever, settled in Chusan as clerk to his 'uncle' Gutzlaff, who was the Civil Commissioner there during the British occupation of the island. It was a real sorrow to part with Sir Henry, who now went south to Hongkong. The relations between the Plenipotentiary and 'his boy' had been almost like those of father and son, and Harry never forgot his chief's kindness. Sir Henry had known how to mingle affection with wise control ; he had made Harry work hard, whilst he indulged him with unwonted privileges ; and the lad had learned that to deserve the Minister's favour he must keep his shoulder to the wheel. Another serious loss was that of J. R. Morrison, who had always been, as his pupil said, 'the very essence of kindness,' and whom he never saw again. The influence of two such men as Pottinger and Morrison over an impressionable boy was of deep importance, and it was no small advantage to him that he should have begun

his public career under men of character such as theirs.

He was now to remain for a year under the tuition of a very different man. The Rev. Charles Gutzlaff has received his full measure of detraction, and undoubtedly he had his faults. His specious manner and intolerable assumption of omniscience procured him the epithet of a 'humbug'; he was always posing as a genius; and those who knew him best put the least faith in him. He was not a man to be unreservedly trusted. Nevertheless his was a strong and original character, interesting as a study for the experienced, and certainly very impressive to his juniors. He had a masterful way of imposing his will which was marvellously effective with young people. Among these he was regarded with a sort of fascinated awe which was dear to his self-esteem. It often took years to find him out. And he was not all sham. He knew the Chinese people intimately—better perhaps than any other man of those early days—and he had a considerable though not very scholarly command of the Chinese language. He pretended to speak in every dialect that China could boast, *et quibusdam aliis*; but he could really converse with the mandarins and people in a fluent and intelligible manner. The Chinese regarded him as their friend, and would throng around him with petitions, convinced of his protecting influence with the 'outer barbarians' whom he served. He was naturally kind-hearted, though irritable, suspicious, and thin-skinned, and his policy with the Chinese was to be extremely conciliatory. On the whole it was not a bad thing for Harry Parkes to take a turn at this line of action: he was soon to learn enough of the drastic policy from others, and it was

well for him to see what could be done—or not done—by milder measures. And in Gutzlaff he found a man who was honestly anxious to help him. His conduct towards the boy who had come under his charge was always marked by affection, if not by judgment. He certainly did his duty in directing the boy's studies, though it may be doubted whether the main credit of his astonishing progress in Chinese was due to his preceptor. Every day he read with his 'uncle,' it is true; but it was the stiff application to study in his own room that gave him his mastery over the language. Sir Thomas Wade remembered finding him toiling away by himself at a difficult Chinese book in a little shed at Gutzlaff's house at Tinghai, the chief town of Chusan, and envying the lad his energy and his opportunities.

Beside Chinese, he was learning China. He was living in a Chinese city, journeying about a Chinese island wherever Gutzlaff's magisterial duties led him, and conversing as best he could with Chinamen, when they could be induced to refrain from broken English. He was still a favourite with the authorities, and now that Sir Henry was gone, he made friends with old General Schoedde, who had commanded the 2nd division at Chinkiang, and was now Commander-in-Chief at Chusan. Every morning the worthy General and his young companion used to go marketing together, sometimes with ludicrous results. The boy had many acquaintances in the garrison and squadron, and took his share in the amusements without which no British army can support existence. The sailors got up theatricals in the harbour, and the officers retorted by turning the old joss-house into a theatre. Harry did

not think much of these performances, but the officers' races excited his keenest emulation. He had a rascally old pony, endowed with a noble spirit of independence, and him he resolved to enter for a race against a midshipman's mount. The animal, however, did not share his enthusiasm, but trotted off for home, and when his rider remonstrated somewhat too vigorously for comfort, the outraged beast threw him over his head. The boy was not to be beaten at the first trial, however, and by a 'middy' too, and demanded a fresh race. He was thrown again, and reports himself much 'cast down' at the catastrophe, but determined to try once more.

The months at Tinghai passed pleasantly enough, in hard work and long rides into the interior, which was full of natural beauty. It was one of the sights of Tinghai to watch Gutzlaff starting on horseback on one of his tours of inspection among the villages: 'The short squat figure,' as an eye-witness paints him, 'the clothes that for shape might have been cut in a village in his native Pomerania ages ago: the broad-brimmed straw hat; the great face beneath it, with that sinister eye'; and beside him the active little figure and gay young face of Harry Parkes on his cantankerous old pony.

At the end of eleven months he sailed south to pass his Chinese examination at Hongkong, after which he was appointed Interpreter at Foochow. This port, however, was not yet opened, and in the meantime Sir Henry Pottinger sent him to learn consular business under Robert Thom at Canton. The winter of 1843-1844 was passed between routine work in the consulate at Canton, where the foreign residents enjoyed little liberty of movement, and the Chinese Secretary's office

at Hongkong, where he acted as Assistant. He was with Pottinger at the signing of the Supplementary Treaty of Hu Mun Chai on October 8th 1843, and in January 1844 he undertook a large part of the responsible duty of taking delivery from the Chinese Government at Canton of the instalment of \$3,000,000 of the indemnity then due, and shipping it to Hongkong. He was making such progress in Chinese, under a Canton teacher, that he was able to act as interpreter at Sir Henry Pottinger's farewell interview with Kiying, the Governor-General, in April 1844. He had in fact finished his apprenticeship ; he had mastered the elements of consular duties, and had acquired a fair knowledge of the language ; he was ready for his post and impatient for responsible work. Nor had he long to wait, for in June he was appointed to Amoy.

When Harry Parkes arrived at Amoy at the end of June 1844 as Interpreter to Her Majesty's Consulate he was fairly launched upon his career. He might doubtless have elected to remain in the Chief Superintendent's office at Hongkong, and helped to direct affairs from headquarters, as his late chief Morrison had done, and after him Gutzlaff and Wade and others. But he preferred the more direct responsibility of consular work, the closer touch with passing events ; and the novelty of such duties at the ports which were then for the first time thrown open to foreign trade was an added attraction to a lover of adventure. A Consul's life may run through the whole gamut from the most dismal monotony to the highest pitch of excitement. At a European port his duties are limited as a rule to commercial routine ; few cases of difficulty arise, and if they should occur, there is always a

Minister within easy reach on whom to cast the responsibility. A Consul in Europe is apt to be suffocated with *ennui*. He has few opportunities for the exercise of his individual ability or judgment: he has merely to be discreet and follow rules and precedents. His duties vary, no doubt, in different ports; he may be very hard worked, or he may, like some American consuls, devote his ample leisure to the cultivation of the art of fiction; but his work is never exciting and seldom interesting. But when a Consul is stationed at some Eastern port and has to deal with Asiatic officials and Oriental bigotry, his life is not uneventful. The Levant branch of the service has had its share of difficulties and danger, and Consuls in Turkey have enjoyed the privilege of responsible action in grave emergencies, though the delight of personal responsibility has been grievously curtailed by the telegraph wire. Levant Consuls in the old days were not merely commercial superintendants; they were diplomatic agents.

The Chinese branch of the consular service has always been a thing apart. It demands special linguistic preparation and involves peculiar relations with the local authorities. In the days when Harry Parkes joined it, there was ample opportunity for the exercise of individual capacity. The Consul in China had to deal with a people poles apart from him in race, language, and political ideas. His relations were with provincial authorities, instead of with the Foreign Office of the country, and these provincial authorities were singularly independent of the Central Government in matters of detail, and capable of causing serious mischief by the exercise of their personal tastes and

dislikes. To them the Consul had to refer in all cases relating to his duties, which were tolerably extensive. His functions were not merely commercial, but political, judicial, one might almost say universal. His duty was to protect the interests and extra-territorial rights of his countrymen; to see that the Treaties were carried out; and in the case of an infraction of Treaty rights to obtain redress as best he could. In European countries such infractions are extremely rare, and difficulties seldom arise; but in China, according to the temper of the local authorities, such emergencies are always arising, and must be settled out of hand before they grow too big to be disposed of by diplomacy. Of course the five Consulates which were created in 1843 had their official centre in the Chief Superintendent of Trade and Plenipotentiary at Hongkong; but it took six weeks to get an answer from Hongkong to an appeal for instructions from a Consul at Shanghai, and meanwhile the question in dispute would be hardening and spreading like a malignant tumour, till ordinary remedies would no longer suffice to remove it. Unless he wished to involve his country in a serious quarrel, the Consul was often bound to act on his own responsibility, and meet the difficulty before it grew intractable. It was frequently a matter of life or death; it always menaced the safety of the foreign residents—for the whole policy of China was to get rid of foreigners by any and every expedient and at all cost;—and the Consul had to take his life in his hand and act decisively. He had to assert a power which did not really exist, and trust to prestige in the absence of gunboats. It was a splendid school for men who were not afraid of responsibility; but a

purgatory for cowards. 'The Consul's position in China,' said Sir Rutherford Alcock, 'is one in which the character of the officer most especially will make itself felt.' He must be a man of firm will and unflinching courage, ready to 'take the bull by the horns' in a resolute fashion when called upon. The least hesitation or timidity would infallibly damage British influence and endanger our interests with a people who are keen observers and no mean judges of character. To degrade the Consul in the eyes of the people by petty affronts was a fixed policy with Chinese officials, for by so doing they believed they were degrading the whole race of 'barbarians.' In China a Consul was not merely the man who looked after the shipping: he was regarded by the people of the country as the head of his nation at his port. He was fully recognized as the representative of his country. He exercised political functions, and practically received the respect due to diplomatic rank.

He was something else, besides political agent. He was a judge. The Consul acted as police magistrate in hearing disputes between masters and seamen, cases of assault, and serious crimes among the foreign community; he dealt as a judge with common-law cases; granted probates; sat as coroner; and generally conducted the legal affairs of the port. This he did by the light of common sense and the help of his law books, for he seldom had any legal training: yet it is remarkable how few consular judgments were ever reversed by the appellate courts at Hongkong. At Shanghai the judicial duties of the Consul became so heavy that it was at last found necessary to appoint a separate judge. And the Consul had not merely to

administer the law, he had to execute it. There were then no consular police; no Chinamen in the service of the Consulate could be expected—or encouraged—to collar an Englishman; and if an arrest had to be made, Her Majesty's Consul was supposed to lay hands on the man in person. Sir Rutherford Alcock used to sum up his legal functions by saying he was 'everything from a Lord Chancellor to a Sheriff's officer.'

In the early days of the service in China the Consul was seldom able to speak Chinese. He was generally 'an officer and a gentleman' who had claims upon Government, and however considerable his other qualifications might be, Chinese formed no part of them. His Vice-Consul, if he had one, was equally unversed in the language in which all negotiations with the local authorities had to be transacted. In China, it may be observed, French is *not* the language of diplomacy, and in 1844 it was rare to find a Chinese official who knew any tongue besides his own. In these circumstances the Interpreter's office in the Consulate was one of great importance and responsibility. He was usually the only European in the office who spoke and read Chinese, and he stood towards the Consul in the same relation as the Chinese Secretary of later days did to the Minister at Peking. He had to conduct all interviews with the Chinese officials, and upon his readiness, tact, and address the success of a negotiation often depended. Without his aid the Consul was helpless. Nor was this aid confined to strict interpretation of the Consul's words. In a country where, it is said, 'the rules of ceremony are three hundred and the rules of behaviour three thousand,' there are innumerable little indications, in

manner, phraseology, and tone, which the Interpreter alone could catch and appreciate and act upon, and there was no time or opportunity to explain such inferences to his official chief during a heated argument at a Chinese yamen. In all transactions with the natives the Interpreter's part was little inferior to that of the Consul himself. It was indeed a post of grave responsibility, especially for a lad of sixteen. But to Harry Parkes work without responsibility was like an egg without salt.

The young Interpreter began a new journal on his arrival at Amoy; and a few sentences will show the characteristically earnest way in which he took his duty.

'Amoy, 1st July 1844. . . . Here I am just arrived at Amoy in the office of Interpreter, a post that I have been expecting for some time, and which, by the by, is worth holding. I think I shall have an easy berth enough, but that by no means pleases me, for so much the less chance of distinction. Sir Henry wanted very much to send me to Foochow, and so did Mr Lay, but Mr Davis, [who had succeeded Sir H. Pottinger as Chief Superintendant] being rather contrarily inclined, determined to send me off here. I think that I might certainly have just as well been sent here when the port was opened, which in fact I was very nearly doing, having left Canton on my way, but was ordered back again. I am certain, however, that it is best to consider that all things are for the best, and perhaps I might have got into some scrape if I had come here before. Sir Henry has now left China, and in him I have lost a good master. Mr Davis I have not seen much of, as he lives much more secluded, but I am certain that he does not possess many of the frank, generous, kind and endearing qualities of his predecessor,—but I forget I have now left Hongkong and all these high people, and am here alone with—my journal.'

'On Monday the 24th of June 1844, I embarked on board H.M. Str. *Spiteful*. This I think I must set down as an important day in the annals of my life; for though I have twice or thrice set out much in a similar manner upon my own crook and hook, I have either not filled any important post, or have had some person or other to superintend my movements. But here I am now perfectly alone, holding a situation of some responsibility, but which suits me well,—at least I like it—sent forth by myself,—or having cast away the apron-strings, as some would say, but which I think are at times comfortable things for one to nestle under, —to battle against the potent and overpowering stream of the world, but which, if a higher Hand upholds me, I hope to oppose.'

Amoy is built on the west side of an island about thirty-five miles in circuit, separated from the mainland by channels a mile or two broad. Parkes's earlier visits had shown him the barren character of the granite hills on the south and west, which chiefly strike the first glance; but the prevailing naked rockiness is varied by some wide cultivated plains dotted with villages between the hills and the sea. Trees are scanty, except here and there round the villages, and all fruit and most of the meat are imported. Fishing is the chief occupation of the inhabitants, who in 1844 seemed poor and degraded. Their houses and temples were neglected and ruinous and the whole place was steeped in squalor. 'Never do I recollect seeing a more dirty place,' was Parkes's comment: 'the streets being narrow and filthy to an extreme.' The people he describes as

'A most obstreperous race, caring nothing for their mandarins, but actually rising in rebellion against them when they make attempts to put them down. Cases of

police and soldiers being killed are of repeated occurrence, but in an affray that happened the other day the mandarins themselves did not escape. . . . The whole coast of Fuh Kien, and especially from Amoy northwards, is completely lined with pirates, whole villages [of them] residing together and sallying out on cruises, when not following their normal avocations of fishermen. Villages often turn out and fight pitched battles with each other with fearful animosity, so that many lose their lives. Clanship seems to be carried to a great height. Even in Amoy they are not quiet but quarrel fiercely with each other. For some time the coolies have been in the habit of firing at one another from the wharves: . . . but this is by no means pleasant as it interferes with the foreigners; for during these fights cargo cannot be landed nor [are] the proprietors of the Hong facing the wharf able to go abroad.'

The consular office was at Amoy city, but the Consul and the English community, which included seven missionaries, lived for the most part on the little island of Koolangsoo immediately opposite, where the small British garrison was quartered as a material guarantee for the due payment of the war indemnity. At first there was little to do. For the first few years after the Treaty, whilst England still maintained her garrisons at Chusan and Koolangsoo, no open violation of its conditions was attempted—at least in the northern ports. Not that the Chinese ever meant to observe the Treaty. The Formosa massacre, the denunciations by placard, the riots and firing of the factories at Canton in December 1842, the persecution of Chinese in British employ, the systematic encouragement and arming of 'village braves' to annoy the foreigner, were all signs of the

invincible repugnance with which the Treaty was held by the official classes—that hidebound body of pedantic literati, the grist of an irrational examination-mill, who represent alike statesmanship and clerkship in China. Trained in a rigid and narrow curriculum which takes its finality and infallibility from Confucius, but resembles his philosophy no more than medieval scholasticism resembled primitive Christianity; convinced that "every detail of polity and conduct was settled for ever some twenty-four centuries ago, and that they alone possess the true and infallible code, the literati, mandarins, or civil servants of China offer an impregnable front to Western ideas. Whatever point may be urged, the appeal is immediately made to the so-called Confucianism which a series of senseless examinations has rammed into their brains; for whatsoever is not Confucian is necessarily bad. Against this stone wall of ultra-conservatism, politicians, philosophers, and missionaries batter in vain. There is no loophole for introducing a new idea into the mandarin's *kosmos*: every possible conjuncture is provided for by hard and fast rules, and evolution and progress have no place in the system. The much-examined Chinese civilian's brain is compressed by the Confucian Procrustes into the same mould as his great-grandfather's was, and as his great-grandson's will be, much as their women's feet are squeezed into the same-sized shoe. This it is which makes the Chinese politician so formidable an opponent: there is no flaw in his armour." Unless you can uproot the very foundations, and convince him that the system is hopelessly obsolete, you cannot shake a mandarin's self-complacency. We have not shaken him a jot in

all the fifty years that have passed since the Treaty of Nanking was signed. As he was, he is, and doubtless will be *in saecula saeculorum*.

It will readily be perceived that the admission of 'red-haired barbarians,' *hung-mo-yǎn*, to a position of equality was no conceivable part of the mandarins' system, and of course they opposed the Treaty tooth and nail. But so long as English troops were at hand the opposition had to be veiled, and little open hostility could be attempted. What Sir John Davis termed 'attempts of an evasive or subdolous description' were frequently made to humiliate the Consul and hamper the foreign trade, but these could be checked by a firm hand. The great thing was not to let a stitch drop in the fabric. A better metaphor is supplied in Mr Michie's *Englishman in China*: 'To carry out a treaty which was odious to Chinese officials in general, most of all to the bureaucracy and populace of the main centre of intercourse, Canton, required an effort analogous to that of maintaining a body of water at an artificial level—success in either case depending upon completeness. It is easier to keep the reservoir intact than to compromise with leakages.' To keep the cistern of our Chinese relations water-tight was the main pre-occupation of our ablest Consuls, and every crack, however small, had to be instantly plugged. The real importance of these early years at the newly-opened ports lay in the gradual formation of precedents and establishing the rights of foreigners in matters of detail among a people peculiarly tenacious of precedent and observant of the minutiae of etiquette. Everything had to be begun *ab initio*. The very right of Englishmen to hire houses had to be diplomatically fought for at each

separate port, and the establishment of a Consulate within the city was a source of general opposition, which, at Canton, was only settled by a war fifteen years after the Treaty had been signed. In these and minor points the Consul had to proceed with equal firmness and prudence; for he knew that whatever he sowed his successors must reap, and a mistake might involve a long series of misunderstandings. He had to be circumspect in the paying and receiving of visits, exact in the phrasing of documents, and his suspicions must be always alert to mark a disrespectful engrossing of a name in the calligraphy of the mandarins' scribe, or a shade of contempt in the placing of a title. To Europeans these are trifles, but they form a serious element in Chinese diplomacy, and on the due observance of such details depends very often the estimate in which a foreign consul, and with him a whole foreign community, is held by the native population on whose temper their lives may depend.

During a visit to Foochow in September, in order to recover from a severe attack of fever, Parkes had an object-lesson of the uselessness of humouring Chinese officials. Mr Lay, the elder, adopted the policy of extreme conciliation, yielding in every possible way to native customs and prejudices, and effacing himself as much as he could. It was the policy—to borrow a phrase from another land and time—of 'killing Home-Rule with kindness.' For a long time he even abstained from flying his flag, for fear of offending the people, and when at last he did hoist it he did it in such a manner that he made himself a laughing-stock. Parkes tells the anecdote in a letter to Mr Lockhart:

'Mr Lay continues to succumb very much to Chinese

manners and customs, of which the following instance may be quoted:—He has at last hoisted the flag at Foochow, but after the Chinese fashion on a small transverse pole which does not reach more than half-mast high. Captain Hewitt of the steamer *Medusa* observed this whilst running up the river (the [new] Consulate being on a hill and visible for a great distance off), and immediately supposed that the flag was hoisted only half-mast in consequence of some death having happened at the Consulate. With no little consternation and trepidation he called on Mr Lay, and with a countenance expressive of the utmost concern inquired what had happened, as the flag was hoisted half-mast. It was with no small surprise that he heard Mr Lay say “Nothing; but I hoist the flag so because it is the wish of the Chinese.” He thinks the people adore him.’

Mr Lay also submitted to be lodged in a Consulate which was a ‘wretched lowest-class Chinese house, accessible only by a filthy little alley.’ The result of all this was what might have been expected. Three gentlemen of the steamer *Proserpine* were set upon by villagers, armed with hoes and mattocks, and one was badly hurt. It was the first occasion of a party of Europeans landing at Foochow, and Harry Parkes thought that ‘a very severe example ought to be made of the offenders to deter them from future acts of this kind. . . . I should look upon it as a matter of real political importance.’ He had already begun to grasp the essentials of Treaty observances in China. But Mr Lay apparently thought little of the affair, and when the Plenipotentiary himself, Mr Davis, arrived at Foochow a few days later, on his first official visit, it is not surprising to read that the Viceroy of the province, who lived at Foochow, did not call upon him, that the

mandarins' presents of food were 'perfect carrion,' and that the officials were as contemptuous as such folk are apt to be when allowed to get the bit between their teeth. Davis was not the man to put up with an affront. He received the mandarins very stiffly on H.M.S. *Castor*, since Lay's Consulate was unfit for his rank, and administered a lecture—one result of which was that a new house was provided for the Consul. Those things happened while Parkes was recruiting his health at Foochow, and their meaning was not lost upon him.

CHAPTER IV

WITH SIR RUTHERFORD ALCOCK

1844-1845

THE young Interpreter's judgment was gradually forming itself, but in his lonely post he felt the need of a guiding mind. Captain Gribble seems to have left his assistant to take pretty much his own way, and it was fortunate that a different master came to rule the Consulate at Amoy shortly after Parkes's return thither in October, before he could have fallen into desultory habits of work or thought. The new Consul possessed just the qualities that impress the young most powerfully. Mr Alcock* had been an army surgeon who had seen hard service with the Foreign Legions in the Peninsula, and his breast blazed with tokens of the distinguished part he had played, till an injury to his hands closed his career with the colours. He was still only thirty-five. He had the courage, physical and moral, which is the first condition of success in China, and his fine manner and polished conversation of the man of the world were joined to a high and refined character and an unflinching devotion to duty. To serve under such a master

* Since this was written Mr Michie has given an excellent account of Sir Rutherford Alcock's career in his *Englishman in China*, 2 vols., 1900.

was no small advantage to an ambitious boy. Harry had reason to be grateful to destiny for throwing him into good hands in the early days of his career. He was fortunate in the very beginning, in coming out to a sister's home, where good women did their inestimable work in moulding the character. He was fortunate in entering upon official life under the auspices of a man of so noble and refined a nature as Morrison. It was a unique advantage to go through the first China war under his guidance, and to be brought in contact with distinguished leaders in arms and diplomacy when he had but recently put on the breeches. The favoured pupil of Morrison became the favourite of Pottinger, and a new and encouraging influence came over the young life.

And now, under these fostering influences, the lad had grown to years of indiscretion, if ever indiscretion was to enter into his life. He was sixteen, and China to a lad of sixteen is capable of acting the siren and luring him to whirlpools out of which he shall hardly struggle without degradation. It was the critical moment, when he found himself, an inexperienced youth, set free from the controlling influences of home, cast loose from his old ties and associations, and left to take care of himself in a remote port, where the checks of public opinion and social intercourse had barely an existence. At precisely this vital moment, Consul Alcock came upon the scene, and a powerful influence entered into the life of the young Interpreter. For five years the two were closely associated in daily work and intimate friendship, and the association bred mutual benefit. In the refined home of Mr and Mrs Alcock, in their intellectual tastes and accomplishments,

in their sympathy and encouragement, Harry found the pure element in which he could take free and wholesome breath. They helped him in his studies, associated him in their recreations, nursed him through fever,—in a word, they made him at home, in the best and heartiest sense.

To these happy influences, added to his own naturally refined and wholesome temperament, Harry Parkes owed the privilege of retaining his ideals. He gave himself no austere airs and preached not at all; but he seemed insensible to vice, and conversation became purer in his presence. The piquant story of the jovial mess-room somehow appeared out of place when he was by, and scandal never interested him. He never lost his chivalrous feeling for women. 'What a rich blessing,' he said, 'has been vouchsafed to mankind in the society of good and intellectual women.' 'It grieves me,' he wrote some years later, when told of a lady's misconduct, 'because I love to think upon woman as a pure holy being, who should control the fiercer and worse passions of men, instead of ministering to them.' Of course this was not written by a boy of sixteen; but it is quoted here because the tone it indicates was a marked characteristic in every stage of his life. The man of thirty and the boy of sixteen felt alike: there was no lament in later years over 'lost illusions,' for to him the ideal ever remained true, and he never swerved from his loyal allegiance to that chivalrous spirit,—that

subtle master under Heaven
Not only to keep down the base in man,
But teach high thought and amiable words . . .
And love of truth, and all that makes a man.

that his young Interpreter could explain his meaning in fluent Chinese :—

‘ Seeing that without this aid a Consul fresh from Europe would have been both dumb and powerless, it will be easily understood how great was that relief to my mind, and how much it would naturally predispose me to think well and favourably of my juvenile A.D.C. But the truth is, I feel, as I look back through the long vista of nearly fifty years to my first experience in so novel a field, that there was much besides his eager intelligence and self-reliant character to win him personal regard,—more especially from his chief, with whom he was so closely connected by a community of work and a common interest.’

Some account of the portentous ceremonies which followed a change of Consuls is given in the journal ; and it will be noticed that in his dealings with the Chinese the new Consul took a stand on his dignity from the outset :—

‘ Mr Alcock came over in a very flash style. Full uniform, cocked hat, blue coat with silver lace and gold buttons, and blue trousers with broad silver stripe. He also wore no less than six Spanish orders of knighthood and chivalry that had been awarded him in Spain. As usual we had to wait a long time for the arrival of the mandarins, and at one o’clock Mr A. sent to ask them, rather abruptly, whether it was their intention to come to-day or not, which soon brought them round. All came excepting the Admiral, who was away cruising after pirates. We gave them a very fair spread, and though still early the champagne was done ample justice to by our worthy celestial friends. Mr A. began at first to discuss business matters, but as usual they waived it altogether, and expressed their inability to do [any]thing of themselves. One point that Mr A. chiefly pressed was to get the Chinese to build houses for us, and we to rent them from them ; but it seems

that there are but few large capitalists here, and trade is where they like best to invest their money. It seems however to be poor policy on the part of our Government. Why can they not at once build a good handsome substantial Consulate, and have done with the matter? *

The return visit to the mandarins took place on the 8th, when they gave the foreigners 'a splendid dinner and were exceedingly jolly,' drinking the Queen's and Emperor's healths with the honours. Among other things they had almond tea, which Count Tolstoi now affects, but which Parkes had only once seen before 'at Hu Mun Chai at the signing of the Supplementary Treaty.' Next day the mandarins came, as promised, to pay their respects to Mrs Alcock.

These necessary preliminaries over, the Consulate settled down to its usual work. There was not much stirring: 'trade is now very dull,' according to the journal, 14th November; 'only two ships in the harbour, and those from Manila with rice and *chowchow* cargo, or from Bombay with cotton. Lorchas are beginning to come up from Macao, generally freighted by Chinese.' Amoy was a very out-of-the-way station for news, since it was difficult to beat up against the north-east monsoon, and weeks often passed without a fresh arrival or incident of any kind. The consular vigilance was mainly directed to the discovery of the perpetrators of numerous robberies, the burning question of sycee silver (which the reader will be thankful to be spared), and the kidnapping and imprisonment of the Chinese servants of Europeans.

In the spring of 1845, however, the business of the Consulate at Amoy became more important. The

* This was eventually done; see next page.

British garrison was to be withdrawn from Koolangsoo in March, on the payment of the fifth instalment of the indemnity, and the change would involve the removal of the consular residences from the island to Amoy itself, so soon as the protection of the garrison was removed. To find a suitable building or site in the city was no easy task, especially as the Chinese were disposed to place every difficulty in the way, as they had done at Foochow. Backed by Davis, the gentle Lay had at last overcome these obstacles at Foochow: the question was, would a similar success be attained at Amoy? Parkes managed indeed to secure a site, but here a fresh difficulty arose, which is best explained in the words of his old chief Sir Rutherford Alcock:—

‘One feat Parkes achieved at Amoy before we left which I have often felt surprised at his accomplishing on reflecting upon the inherent difficulties of the task. I was instructed to obtain a site on the Amoy side of the harbour, since we were about to surrender to the Chinese according to Treaty the island of Koolangsoo, previously occupied by our troops and the Consulate: and not only to obtain a site, but to take steps for building a Consulate. To do this necessitated the drawing of plans and entering into estimates with a Chinese builder, who spoke no word of English, though I believe he had been at Canton and Macao and gained some knowledge of European (or Anglo-Chinese) kinds of structure and architecture for the accommodation of our merchant princes—as they might not be unaptly styled in those days, long gone by now.

‘With the help of Mr F. L. Hertslet, Assistant in the Consulate, who had an excellent knowledge of architectural details, and a clever Anglo-Indian Officer of Engineers, Lieutenant Collingwood, I succeeded in getting out a plan, and not only a plan, but a model which was forwarded for approval

to the Plenipotentiary at Hongkong. But this was the least part of the difficulty. It was further necessary to form on the plan a specification for a builder's contract ; and having done this, for the Interpreter to find means of putting all the precise and technical terms of the English specification into intelligible Chinese ! It was accomplished however ; and in proof the Consulate was contracted for and built—and not only built but occupied by the whole consular establishment for several years. How the Interpreter's part however was achieved or by what *tour de force* or *legerdemain* he ever succeeded in bringing to the Chinese builder's comprehension the details of plans and specification I have never understood ; and I am not sure that Parkes himself fully comprehended the steps by which his achievement was effected !'

This was not the last service rendered by the Interpreter to the British community at Amoy. Six years later he was again sent to the same post, when Mr Sullivan was Consul, and although Parkes spent but three months there before going on to Canton, he contrived to settle a difficulty which had defied all the Consul's efforts for three years. The point was simple enough. The English colony wanted a plot of land to build their houses on, and the Chinese evaded the request by every means in their power. The official who had power to make the grant was the local Intendant or Taotai, but this wily gentleman was careful to keep away from the Consul's reach, and his deputy was equally scrupulous in giving Amoy a wide berth. Such was the situation when Parkes arrived in November 1851. The problem was how to catch the Taotai. Parkes volunteered to chase him and run him to earth. He was believed to be at Hinghwa,

120 miles inland, and no Englishman, official or not, had ever ventured so far from his port. It was a question whether even a Consul had the right to travel inland. The Treaty authorized him to communicate with certain specified local functionaries, but it did not say that he was to hunt them up over the face of China. Parkes, however, was quite prepared to argue the question, and meanwhile he set off on his chase.

It was rather like a good run for a goal at football. One after the other the local authorities tried to 'collar' him, and still he bore on. First the District Magistrate tackled him with the news that the Sub-prefect or Viceroy's Deputy was coming who would settle everything: but Parkes said his business was not with any 'Haifang' or 'Wei-yuen,' but with the missing Taotai—and went on. Sure enough this very Haifang turned up next day, on his way to Amoy, and urged him to go back with him: it was of no use; the obstinate young man was bound for Hinghwa and to Hinghwa he would go. Such were his orders. There was nothing for it but the Sub-Prefect must 'e'en go when the devil drives.' So the two journeyed on to Hinghwa together. There the Magistrate (Che-hien) told them it was idle to enter the city, as there were no places of public accommodation: nevertheless Parkes entered and was put up in a capital house. It appeared that the Taotai was seriously indisposed: the answer was, 'Very sorry, will wait till he is recovered,' and next day the illness had departed and Parkes had his interview. The Taotai was desolated not to be able to grant the Consul's request, but as the permanent Taotai, for whom he was merely *locum tenens*, was expected in a few days, he must leave the matter to

him. 'Then I will wait for him,' was the troublesome young man's comment; and nothing would dislodge him.

He had four amusing days in the out-of-the-way town, an object of absorbing curiosity to the populace and of anxious solicitude to the authorities, who plied him with vast dinners, ducks, hams, fowls, *bêches de mer*, bamboo root, cabbage, and fat pork, cooked by an artist, and showed him every possible civility and respect. The hours of waiting were beguiled by many visitors, the more intelligent of whom, like the Che-hien, who was really a good fellow, carried on 'an animated conversation on thermometers, barometers, steamers, navigation, characters, dialects, diurnal motion of earth, etc.,' whilst others asked for specimens of English writing, which greatly astonished them, for they were under the impression that the only written medium was the Chinese. A whole family of sons and grandsons were brought by their teacher, and behaved charmingly, and went off delighted with Parkes's calligraphy, which they prized above cakes, though they appreciated bright English shillings. Altogether the inn must have been unusually frequented during the Interpreter's visit. In the evening he would go out on the city walls to smoke his cigar and study the inhabitants. One of his questioners asked him if black men were natives of Canton whose faces had been blackened by the English to debar them from distinction.

On the fourth day the new Taotai arrived, and speedily admitted Parkes to an interview. At first he tried the usual plan of talking the young man down, but on being informed that his visitor was not deaf he became quieter in his manner. 'I told him,' writes

Consul Lay once represented Great Britain. From the overhanging gallery of one of the riverside houses you look down on the strange floating population who live all the year in house-boats, even when the roofs are shining with white hoar-frost; and the view of the Chinese city, and beyond it 'the bold outline of mountains and wooded heights, the winding river covered with numerous gaily-painted junks, the green rice-fields, and the busy swarming population, is probably not to be paralleled in any part of China.'

To approach the Consulate one interminable street, three miles long, has first to be traversed. It leads from the bridge to the city gate, and is like all other Chinese streets, narrow, dirty, choked with projecting stalls, stoves, trays, portable kitchens, and thronged by bawling crowds of a forbidding and pugnacious aspect. The bearers press on with your chair, upsetting and breaking goods as they go, and pursued by the curses and blows of the injured dealers, who have not yet grown accustomed to the ways of 'foreign devils,' and would dearly like to murder them if they dared. Still the street winds on, between rows of open shops, with flaring signboards and gaudy lanterns overhead, and cook shops, wine shops, tea rooms, orange stands, and sugar-cane vendors at every corner; past the shroffs with their bunches of sham cash over their doors; among groups of gamblers and boys tossing for sweetmeats, and here and there a sauntering Buddhist bonze, or an official gentleman carried in his chair, a culprit dozing in his wooden cangue, or an itinerant literary man spouting from a bench to a group of tea-drinkers.

At last the massive wall and gate of the city itself

are reached, and the streets become wider, and the shops larger. Foochow was a finer city than Shanghai or Amoy, or even Ningpo in some respects, in 1845. The houses, of course, are at all angles out of the perpendicular, and one wonders they do not fall in, but they are often two-storeyed and look so gorgeous in their paint and gilding, that one forgets to notice that the doors will not open nor the windows shut. Red paint and gilt tablets and flowers and monsters in bold relief cover a multitude of architectural sins. The mandarins' houses are a labyrinth of passages, gateways, courts, temples, and shops: they cover acres of ground, and possess scarcely one comfortable room. But outside they do not betray themselves.

A mile more brings us to a fine sombre avenue, and then the Union Jack is seen floating over the rocks which surround the British Consulate—as it was in 1845. The site which Consul Lay had obtained with so much difficulty was called Wu-shih Shan, 'Black Stone Hill,' and was reached by a stiff climb up terraced paths. The consular buildings consist of a picturesque collection of detached temples, shaded by banyans and pines, and the priests who had occupied this sequestered monastery not only consent to let it to Her Majesty's Government for a few hundred dollars, but depute their chief bonze to act as a sort of head-gardener to the 'barbarian' invaders of their retreat. From the top of the hill stretches a view which it were hard to match in China. Below is the city, with its heavy battlemented walls and watch-towers, its sea of green tiles broken here and there by a joss pole or the red patch of a temple or a mandarin's palace, and its ever-murmuring hum of busy

life, its street cries, its din of gongs and tomtoms, and its guns saluting the mandarins as they pass out of the gates. The confused babel of sound rises up to the monastic solitude of the temple-Consulate, and mingles on the hill with the scream of the buzzard hawk overhead. Beyond is the spacious undulating plain—an amphitheatre of twenty miles across—closed in by the girdle of the hills.

Such was the picturesque setting of the spot where Harry Parkes exercised the duties of Interpreter in the years 1845-1846. Foochow, with all its beauty, had its drawbacks. It was entirely out of the road of visitors and news; ships seldom came over its dangerous bar; foreign commerce was at a standstill; and the people were thoroughly unfriendly. *Fan kow*, 'foreign dog,' was the Foochow mode of saying *fan kwei*, 'foreign devil,' and the word was often dinned into the ears of Englishmen as they walked through the streets, jostled by an inquisitive and impudent crowd. The hostile attitude was partly due to race, for the Fuh Kien people are a violent stock, and partly to the presence of a large Tartar garrison. Being the capital of the province, with a population of over half a million, Foochow was favoured with the presence, not only of a Viceroy (*Tsung-tu*), but of a Tartar General (*Tseang-keun*), who commanded 2000 truculent Manchus. These had their own separate quarter in the city (where even the Chinese did not venture to penetrate till recently), and were a fertile source of danger and anxiety to the foreign community. From an official point of view, the presence of high provincial officers gave Foochow a special importance; but in the merely consular aspect, its want of foreign trade reduced it to insignificance.

The Consul's work was diplomatic rather than commercial. He had to protect his subjects from the violence and insults of the population, and give them a fair chance of creating a trade where as yet no trade was. There was also the intolerable round of official visits to be made. Parkes evidently took some pride in the consular 'turn-out,' when visits of ceremony were to the fore :—

'We go in great state on these visits (he wrote), quite 'mandarin fashion' (*à la Chinoise* is becoming too common a term now). Mr Alcock, Walker, and myself have each a splendid chair, very large, covered with blue cloth, with tassels and braid to correspond, the lining and furniture inside of light blue silk, cushions violet. We are carried by four coolies, each in a kind of uniform, with the usual official cap, and before the first chair, and after the last, two police walk, whilst two of our private servants, all dressed out officially, attend each chair. Mr Alcock has a large umbrella carried before him, made of red silk with treble folds. Mr Lay was the first to introduce this custom, and I think it is proper and quite political to keep it up, as it raises one in the ideas of the people: besides you must in some degree accord with the manners and customs of the people where you may be, which is nothing more than a foreigner would do in London. You may then conjecture that we make no little show with this *cortège* and 'astonish the natives a few.' The gongs and lictors we have not patronized, deeming these horrible appendages unnecessary and very disagreeable. This being a provincial Government, I think it is somewhat right to act up to one's station and make some show, which the Chinese think so much of, even in a political point of view.

'When the people heard that a foreign lady had come, it created no little sensation, and crowds collected

daily to see Mrs Alcock land. . . . Numbers came running in every direction, in some places blocking up the streets, and rendering it difficult for the chairs to pass along. Mr Alcock looked after his wife, and I had charge of Mrs Bradford (her maid), both of us thus with our hands full, which gave me no little anxiety, and very glad was I to perform the last act of attention, namely, handing them out of their chairs when arrived at their own house. They also were not a little alarmed,—the maid-servant of course ten times the worse, who, I thought, was going to faint half a dozen times, and I was more dead than alive with fright in consequence, having no smelling bottle in my pocket! However, Mrs Alcock has made herself a perfect heroine, being the first lady that entered the city of Foochow. The worst is that having now got in, there is no getting out; for as soon as she shows her head out of the gate, the crowd that instantly collects obliges her at once to return. . . . The city is very large, and, what is more, very clean, with fine streets; but the mob that is sure to attend you whenever you go out takes away all pleasure whenever you attempt to walk in them.'

The mob was like to do more than spoil the pleasure of a walk, if opportunity for mischief arose. We have seen how they treated the visitors of the *Proserpine* (Dr Startin and Mr Pottinger) in 1844. Such outrages were the natural expression of the popular disgust at the sight of 'foreign dogs,' and might always be expected to recur when occasion offered. No doubt a good deal depended on the demeanour of the Europeans, and occasionally provocation may have been given; but very often no possible excuse can be found for the violence and fanaticism of the people—a fanaticism all the more curious when contrasted with the toleration of the easy-going monks who let their sacred temples

to the Consul. Parkes himself was attacked in October in the Tartar quarter, when quietly walking on the walls, and being unarmed was forced to fly from the stones that were hurled at him. The offence was the worse in that the assailants knew perfectly well that he belonged to the Consulate. The necessary punishment was exacted by the firmness of Consul Alcock. Three of Parkes's younger assailants were severely flogged with bamboos, and three of the older men were exposed for a month with the cangue or wooden collar round their necks. The sentence was the more exemplary since the Tartars had hitherto enjoyed the privilege of entire immunity from this humiliation, and the sight of three haughty Manchus in the cangue was a perfectly novel spectacle to the astonished populace.

These attacks on Europeans generally followed some similar outrage at Canton, from which centre of anti-foreign sentiment the other ports took their cue. As Parkes wrote in May 1846: 'At present all kinds of reports are reaching us of affairs being in a very unsatisfactory state at Canton: the eyes of China are now fixed upon the struggle that is pending in that quarter, and whichever way the die is cast, its effects will be visibly felt at the other ports.' At Canton in 1845 Vice-Consul Jackson and two other Englishmen had been pelted with stones, menaced with daggers, pinioned, struck, and robbed, amid shouts of 'kill them.' The Fuh Kien men took the hint and attacked the Interpreter at Foochow. In February 1846 Commander Giffard was assaulted at Whampoa on the Canton river, and when Governor Davis wished to exact reparation he was 'snubbed' by the most short-sighted of Foreign Ministers, Lord Aberdeen.

Accordingly the excitable Fuh Kien men followed the lead, stimulated by the presence of a rabble of Canton scoundrels hanging about the suburbs, and in April got up a most promising series of riots and outrages at Foochow. They managed to clear out the houses of two Englishmen before they were suppressed. 'The Consul behaved with the greatest prudence and firmness in the affair, and was on the best terms with the local authorities, who fortunately felt some alarm for themselves in the remissness which caused these troubles ; undertaking to punish the ringleaders, and to make good the English losses.* In June Sir John Davis (who received a baronetcy in 1845), finding that 'the provincial authorities seemed willing to substitute evasion for that indemnity which they had promised to the English sufferers,' sent up stringent instructions to the Consul to demand immediate payment. Mr Alcock, nothing loth, put on the screw in good earnest, and in seventeen days the news came back to Hongkong that forty-six thousand dollars had been paid, and that condign punishment of the offenders had been ordained. In reporting this satisfactory arrangement, the Consul bore testimony to the—

'very efficient services I have witnessed in Mr Parkes the Interpreter: he has not only been indefatigable and zealous during the whole of these negotiations, but his ready fluency in Chinese, and his general knowledge of the forms of business, both Chinese and English, while they entail additional duties upon him, very frequently enable him to render valuable assistance when it could not strictly be expected or required.'

Apart from these public affairs, there is little to record of the young Interpreter's life at Foochow, which

* DAVIS, *China during the War, etc.*, ii. 132.

'jogged on' in much the same routine as at Amoy. He now took his meals with the Alcocks, and had cause to be grateful not only for their unvarying kindness, but for the care and skill with which they nursed him through a fresh attack of fever. 'I can never repay them,' he wrote, 'the lasting obligations I am under to them, for if he had not been in the profession I should have had no medical attendant whatever. All I can do is to pray that they may be repaid tenfold, and praise God for His great mercies in raising me up such friends.' They did more than nurse him bodily, for while the Consul trained him in business, and made him translate every Chinese document in the office, Mrs Alcock helped him in literature and induced him to take up French and German reading. After the day's work they all rode out together, or went sketching, and in the evening they talked and read. These were Harry's happiest hours, for he loved riding, and delighted in intellectual society. He knew nothing of sport, and played no games, except in later years a quiet rubber; his life was always well filled without any devices for killing time. At sixteen he had drawn up one of those plans of daily work which earnest boys are always attempting and abandoning:—'Rise at daylight; work for an hour; dress by eight; read Chinese till ten; breakfast and go to office; be back by four; dine and take exercise; spend evening in light Chinese or English reading.' His plan of work seems to have been carried out with some approach to regularity; he was mastering Manchu and even Tibetan; and he took to studying French with assiduity, though he never learned to speak it well. At this time he wrote few letters, and those very brief.

He grudged the time given up to correspondence, and 'positively detested' writing an epistle to any but his nearest friends. His usual habit—of which he never cured himself—was to put off writing till just before the mail started, and then to scribble what he called 'inane twaddle,' with profuse apologies. There was scarcely any society to be cultivated at Foochow, and social gatherings were restricted by the circumstance that as the Consulate was inside the city an invitation to dine out with the Europeans in the suburbs involved spending the night out also. Chinese official banquets there were, of course, but no European constitution could stand many of these plethoric feasts. A hard cold winter did much to set up his health, and his new quarters, 'three little rooms away from the Consulate,' proved less malarious than his former temple. His spirits continued good, in spite of the dulness of the place, and he was often detected in the perpetration of exceedingly bad puns—a sure proof of cheerfulness.

As to the inner life, to which he sometimes referred in his most intimate letters, he had already acquired a habit of introspection and self-criticism, which revealed a very humble estimate of his own character. He wrote to his elder sister (Nov. 5, 1845):—

'If I reflect for an instant, I find I possess few or no acquirements on which vanity would be permissible, but on the other hand much cause presents itself for shame. Indolence is my besetting sin, a most dangerous fault that everybody that indulges in will rue. Circumstances have so brought it about that apathy has laid hold of me, rendering voluntary exertion painful to me. This I did not notice when my duties occupied me from morning till night, at which I was obliged to work; but as soon as there is some

respite, the little that remains to be done is burdensome, completely testing the truth of the old proverb, that "the less one has to do, the less one will do." I must make, however, some exertion this winter, but so often have my resolutions proved abortive that I am frightened to enter into any more. . . . I shall gradually begin to gather an assortment of good books, though at present I do not want for any, as Mr Alcock allows us free access to his stock, which composes a nice library. In my box I got out a few books, though generally of a light description.'

And again six months later, he wrote:—

'I trust there will be some change one way or another at Foochow, for if little hope is left of the spread of commercial transactions, now most insignificant, our interest in the place will proportionately decrease, and the residence here become insupportably dull. A continuous settled life has no charms for me: and what is more, my pay—a most serious consideration—will be no more on the progressive than the port, for the Interpreter's emoluments are regulated by the amount of commerce done at a port; people not understanding that there is much more arduous work to be done in striving against innumerable difficulties to establish a commercial system at an entirely new and unworked port, than in carrying on the steady routine of loading or unloading the cargoes of vessels, which only requires the moderate attainments of a knowledge of the numerals and the names of the articles in the tariff.'

On New Year's eve he reviewed the past year, and deplored with earnest sincerity his waste of time and opportunities. It is interesting to read the resolutions which the boy drew up for his future guidance. Some relate to devotions and meditation on religion, and such belong to their author alone: but others are less private, and deal with practical matters. They have

the rare quality of permanence, for every one of them was scrupulously observed in later life :—

‘ My spare time, of which I have daily about five hours at command, I intend employing in the improvement of my mind by study, chiefly at present of Chinese, but also a fair moiety to English and other studies. For I conceive that to be unemployed or have nothing to do may be productive of much evil, especially in the unsettling of the mind.

‘ Regarding my income, it is my intention [not] to be niggard or profuse, so that I may be enabled to save and put by some portion for future wants, never forgetting however that charity which I consider an especial duty to attend to.

‘ To take plenty of exercise, and allow eight hours for rest. To observe a somewhat rigid diet, and to abstain as much as possible from wine or intoxicating drinks, conceiving an excess in either to be not only hurtful to the body but decidedly wrong.

‘ To avoid all backbiting and slandering, and to constantly keep in mind and try to act up to the golden rule, “Do unto others as you would be done by.”

‘ By these few simple rules I should wish to have my conduct guided. If they give me some idea of my own unworthiness and littleness, in being unable to act up to them rigidly, they will have answered their purpose well. Pride and vanity are some of my great faults, but with grace from above I need not despair of repressing them.

‘ New Year’s Day [1845]. Here I am at the beginning of another year, the sixteenth new year’s day that I have experienced. May not this give me some idea of the fleetness of time? Certainly these sixteen years seem to me but “as yesterday,” so quick have they successively flown. May this lead me duly to appreciate the pearl of ineffable value, and above all

not to neglect that the time will come when I shall be called upon to render up an account of how I have used it.'

It should be remembered that this is a quotation from a journal written solely for his own eye. Harry Parkes seldom spoke of these things, and was the last man in the world to say prayers in the market-place to be seen of the people. These private reflections are the genuine expression of the boy's aspirations towards a high ideal of conduct; and he kept his resolutions ever fixed before his eyes. The last is specially to be noted; no one ever heard him speak an unkind word of an absent man.

CHAPTER V

SHANGHAI

1846-1849

IN August 1846, when Rutherford Alcock was promoted to be Consul at Shanghai, Walter Medhurst, the Interpreter at that port, was given leave of absence, and Harry Parkes therefore accompanied his chief as Acting Interpreter. The change of ports was an improvement in every respect. Shanghai, though it had only been opened to foreign commerce three years before, was already giving promise of that future prosperity which has since been amply realized. Its central position, its deep river, and secure anchorage close to the wharfs, pointed to a commercial importance which would in time cast even the old supremacy of Canton into the shade. The people were of a milder and more pacific character than the inhabitants of Foochow and Amoy ; and the chief local authority during the critical period of the establishment of the foreign community was fortunately a just and well-disposed Intendant, who largely contributed to the success of the English settlement. But Shanghai owed still more to the firm and consistent, yet kindly, policy of Captain (afterwards Sir George) Balfour, the first Consul at the new port, who began by taking the right tone with the Chinese officials, and was rewarded

by finding his position, and that of the community under his charge, properly recognized by the native authorities. Merchants began to flock to the rising port, and one of Alcock's first achievements was to secure a suitable site for the English residents. A large open space of more than a hundred acres about a mile outside the city was obtained from the Chinese authorities, through the instrumentality of Parkes, and in 1847 some thirty English houses had sprung up on the river front; the English were rapidly deserting their former Chinese tenements for mansions on the Bund; and a church was being built, which was eventually to develop into a cathedral with a bishop and dean. Such was the beginning of the 'Model Settlement' which has long been the pride of European China, and which celebrated its jubilee on the 17th of November 1893.

Consul Alcock and his Interpreter took the lead in the development of the growing settlement; directed the making of roads, the control of the foreshore, and the creation of an active municipal council to manage the affairs of the community. Among other valuable improvements the erection of a beacon out at sea may be specially noticed, since it was 'only placed there by the united exertions of Mr Vice-Consul Robertson and Mr Parkes, the officiating Interpreter, who on two several occasions spent more than a week in the Yang-tsze Kiang in a Chinese boat, directing and urging forward the work,' which had become an urgent necessity in consequence of several wrecks. The young Interpreter, it seems, besides superintending the building of a Consulate at Amoy, was expected to manage marine engineering at Shanghai; but work,

so long as it was real and useful, was always welcome to his energetic nature.

Besides the interest belonging to the growth of a promising settlement, there was much in Shanghai, even in those early days, to recommend it in the eyes of Harry Parkes. Instead of the limited social circle of Amoy and Foochow, there were nearly a hundred English residents at the port, and these included his two sisters—the very first ladies who came to Shanghai—Catharine Lockhart, and Isabella, who had married the Rev. Thomas M'Clatchie in 1846. He had thus two houses which he might call home. The missionaries Medhurst, Milne, and Muirhead were among the best-known residents, and the great houses of Dent, and Jardine, Matheson and Co., had their representatives in the plutocracy of 'merchant princes.' Communications with England had been greatly improved since the Peninsular and Oriental Company had arranged their contract for the mail service in 1845, and books and periodical literature reached Shanghai with a punctuality and profusion altogether unknown at Foochow. The result was an intellectual element in the foreign community for which Harry Parkes had hitherto sighed in vain. The society was as yet too small to suffer from the disintegrating process of cliques: everybody knew everybody else, and common interests knitted them together in a friendly whole. The British Consulate—a handsome Chinese mansion within the city walls—became a social influence under Mrs Alcock's reign, and Harry had his full share in the intercourse which centred round the consular flagstaff. There are few records of his life during this time, for his chief correspondent, Mrs Lockhart, was now at hand

instead of at writing distance. All we know is that he took a good deal of exercise in the rich well-watered country about Shanghai or upon the wide circuit of the ramparts of the city, whence he could survey the spacious plains on the west, and the orchards, perhaps in the delicate blush of peach blossom ; or look down on the gardens, which filled up so much of the enclosure, and the scattered temples and roomy houses ; and beyond these the dense city and crowded suburbs, the forest of masts in the river, and here and there a glimpse of the newly rising foreign settlement. Of his social life one hears that he was always gay and cheerful, always eager to help others and careless of his own comfort ; beloved by many and welcomed by all ; and it is recorded that he was never known to say a harsh word of his neighbours.

Much of the prosperity of the residents was due to the character of the Chinese in Shanghai. They were naturally a peaceable race, compared with some of their neighbours, and the good relations which subsisted between them and the English had been fostered and strengthened by the obvious goodwill of the latter, and the real and tangible benefits they conferred upon the inhabitants, not merely by their trade and custom, but by philanthropic work. In this direction a very remarkable success had been achieved by the Medical Mission, which was represented by Harry's brother-in-law, Mr William Lockhart. The Medical Missionary Society of China had been founded in 1836, chiefly by the efforts of an American, Dr Parker (who became U.S. Commissioner), with the object of encouraging a friendly intercourse with the Chinese by means of gratuitous medical and surgical aid. Dr Parker's

ophthalmic hospital at Canton was adopted by the Society, and a hospital at Macao was opened in 1838, over which Mr Lockhart, a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, and connected with the London Missionary Society, was placed in 1839. During the troubles at Canton these hospitals were necessarily closed, but Mr Lockhart carried on a similar useful work in Chusan during the first British occupation, and besides returning to superintend the Macao institution, took part in founding another of the Society's hospitals at Hongkong. In 1843 he resumed his medical work in Chusan, during the second occupation, and at the close of the year proceeded to Shanghai, where he was present at the opening of the port by Consul Balfour in November, and where, after much difficulty, a house was obtained and regular hospital routine began early in 1844. 'As soon as the hospital was opened,' he says in his interesting work, *The Medical Missionary*, 'and its purpose known, crowds of people came daily to the house, urgently, often boisterously, requesting to be attended to. The applicants were not only residents at Shanghai, but many came from Soochow, Sungkiang, and other cities in the vicinity.'* The people showed the greatest confidence in the skill and goodwill of the surgeon, and before long a larger building became necessary. A well-found Chinese hospital and dispensary, paid for by the foreign community and vested in British residents, was accordingly built in 1846, and the inhabitants flocked from all quarters to be healed. The building of numerous houses and 'godowns' for the ever-increasing mercantile body

* W. LOCKHART, *The Medical Missionary in China*, 122 ff., 240 ff., etc. (1861).

was a source of accidents, and these were successfully attended to by Mr Lockhart. This work went on till 1857, when he left for England, only to return to open a similar hospital later at Peking; and the Shanghai hospital was carried on by others and is still a useful and flourishing institution. It is hardly necessary to point out the good effects such practical services must have exercised upon the relations between the English and the Chinese, which, according to Mr Alcock's report for 1848, were singularly amicable:—

‘Our relations with the people and the authorities leave little to be desired. The former care not to encounter the chances of a disadvantageous collision with us, being well satisfied of our national disposition and ability to exact the fair treatment and peaceable conduct which we may justly claim at their hands; more gentle than the population of the coast further south, they are also less disposed to express by overt acts any dislike or arrogance of feeling they may nourish. The large sums of money annually expended here by the foreign community, and which must circulate among the people of Shanghai, cannot fail to reconcile them to our habitual presence, which apart from such considerations may not be, and I believe is not, more agreeable in the abstract to them than to the rest of their countrymen. They are upon the whole a peaceably-disposed race, ready enough however to take liberties with foreigners if they see any reason to fancy such conduct will be tolerated, but not likely to give great cause of complaint at any time unless relieved from their present fear of consequences, or under grievous provocation. The junkmen of Fuh Kien and other provinces form some exception to this general rule: they are a turbulent and passionate race, much given to disorder and violence, and seldom allow an opportunity to escape either to quarrel or plunder.’

The last sentence bore an unexpected significance almost as soon as it was written. Whilst Mr Alcock was despatching his favourable report upon the relations between foreigners and Chinese at Shanghai, these junkmen, whom he excepts from his general eulogy, were distinguishing themselves by an outrage of a peculiarly savage nature.* Some 13,000 of these fellows had been very unwisely dismissed from the Government employ, and no pains had been taken either to satisfy their just claims or to provide for their accommodation or peaceable conduct. They were 'left to create disorder and commit every species of depredation upon the peaceable inhabitants, while the Government authorities are discussing ways and means and haggling about the amount of bounty to be given on their dismissal to enable them to settle with their families and follow some lawful occupation when they are driven from their homes, the grain junks.' This had been going on for months, and in view of the extremely unsafe condition of the parts of the country disturbed by their presence, Mr Alcock had issued a notification warning British residents against venturing upon extended excursions from Shanghai into the surrounding country.

Three missionaries, however, were not to be deterred from their calling by considerations of personal risk. The city of Tsingpu could be reached and returned from within twenty-four hours, the period to which the excursions of foreigners from the Treaty ports were restricted by the Regulations, and to Tsingpu accordingly Messrs Medhurst, Lockhart, and Muirhead went on 8th March 1848, to distribute Testaments and tracts, as they had often done before. They were going from

* See *Parl. Papers*, 1857, Insults in China, p. 90-185.

house to house engaged in this distribution, when a number of junkmen began to hustle them and throw stones. The missionaries showed a firm front and threatened to appeal to the magistrates, upon which they were suffered to complete their task and pass out of the East Gate on their return home. They had not got half a mile from Tsingpu, however, when they were pursued by an excited mob of junkmen, armed with poles, swords, and other weapons. The missionaries 'began to talk quietly with the men and asked them what they wanted,' but in reply were furiously assailed. Two of them ran for their lives, but returned as soon as they discovered that Mr Lockhart was not with them. They found that he had been thrown to the ground and was being beaten with a heavy iron chain. Luckily he managed to get on his feet again, and all the three missionaries ran for their boat, which was moored five miles from the city. For a mile they fled, closely pursued, and then they could run no further, but gave themselves up for lost. The infuriated crowd belaboured them with rakes and poles ; Mr Medhurst was struck down senseless, and beaten and cut whilst lying prostrate ; Mr Muirhead was severely handled ; and Mr Lockhart was badly wounded in the head. When they were all helpless, the ruffians plundered them of their watches and clothes, and then drove them back to the city. In vain the missionaries (two of whom spoke Chinese) reasoned with their captors and appealed to the passers-by : the junkmen declared that they would carry them on board the grain junks and demand five thousand dollars a head for their ransom or else kill them. As they drew near the city, however, some police runners mingled in the crowd, and

more respectable people came up and tried to assure the prisoners of their safety, and it was clear that the sympathy of the inhabitants was with the victims and not with their assailants, whilst even the latter were ashamed when they recognized in Mr Lockhart the benefactor of the Shanghai hospital. The police runners gradually got the missionaries separated from the junkmen, who slunk away one by one as the city gate was reached. At the office of the district magistrate an inquiry was held and redress was immediately promised. The missionaries were provided with chairs and carefully escorted to their own boat, much shaken, bruised, and hurt, and so reached Shanghai.

Mr. Alcock was not the man to pass over such an outrage. He immediately demanded prompt and full redress from the Intendant. It must be prompt, because the junkmen might be dispersed at any moment, and the criminals get off scot-free. There could be no safety or protection for a small band of Europeans living in the midst of a dense native population if such insults and injuries were not fully redressed with the least possible delay. If such violence were passed over on the ground of the inability of the Chinese authorities to control their own subjects, there might as well be no Treaty at all. Yet this was what the Intendant practically urged, when he replied that the missionaries had gone beyond the limits prescribed by Treaty for excursions, which was not true, and that the junkmen 'pay no respect to laws.' The Chinese must be made to feel their responsibility, and no excuse of their inability to keep order could be accepted for an instant.

Accordingly (wrote Mr Alcock to Sir John Davis,

17th March) our resistance to this plea, and the difficulty of enforcing responsibility for the protection of life and property form the chief features of our intercourse since the peace, and the efforts of the Chinese on the one hand to establish the nullifying clause of irresponsibility, and our determination to enforce the opposite principle of responsibility as the essential condition of the Treaty, and of all treaties, is the whole question at issue with the Imperial Commissioner Kiying, and one which seems at the present moment to threaten the necessity for recourse to active hostilities.

'I trust I shall be excused if I dwell upon conclusions so obvious; but they are all-important, and require, especially at this distance from superior authorities, to be ever kept in view and acted upon unhesitatingly and firmly by the officer charged with the responsible duties of Consul. For theft and loss of property the plea of inability is generally so plausible from the nature of the circumstances as to be in almost every instance effective. Rarely indeed are any efforts on the part of the Consul to recover stolen goods, or to procure the discovery and seizure of the offenders, followed by success, when either the one or the other depends upon Chinese authorities and their underlings. This is an evil of some magnitude; vigilance and care, however, on the part of the British may keep it within some moderate limits; but let the same rule be applicable to acts of violence or outrage to British subjects, in open day and frequented places, and a residence in China must be limited to the range of our own guns, and prove fatal to all hopes of improved commercial intercourse and prosperity in this country.'

In this vital crisis Consul Alcock took his responsibility in his hands with a courage and firmness beyond praise. There were no specific instructions to go upon, and it would have been fatal to wait several

weeks for orders from the Plenipotentiary at Hongkong. To delay would have been to play the Chinese game. The criminals would escape, and British prestige would sink to zero. Six Englishmen had recently been murdered near Canton: were the like atrocities to be permitted at Shanghai? Accordingly, when five days had passed, and nothing but ineffectual promises had been given, the Consul made the memorable announcement that he would stop all payment of duties by British ships until full satisfaction should be obtained; that meanwhile not a single grain junk should leave the river; and that if the chief criminals were not apprehended within forty-eight hours, he would take 'such other measures as the due enforcement of our Treaty rights might seem to demand.'

To realize the full audacity of this spirited announcement it must be stated that there were no less than 1400 junks, laden with grain for Peking, and 50 war junks in the river, backed by at least 13,000 discontented vagabonds in the neighbourhood; and that, to overawe this host by sea and land, the Consul had to rely upon one single sloop-of-war. Commander Pitman of H.M.S. *Childers*, however, responded most pluckily to the call, instantly supported the Consul's action, and summoned the brig *Espiegle* to his aid.*

In vain the local authorities tried to intimidate the Consul, and represented to him the danger of his violent measures and indignant language in the face of an excited and lawless populace, among whom he and his family lived wholly unprotected. The Consul and Interpreter continued in perfect unconcern to traverse

* It is interesting to note that one of De Quincey's latest publications was a glowing narrative of this spirited affair.

the crowded streets in their daily walks to and from the consular office outside the walls, and even the ladies of the Consulate made a point of getting into their chairs and making their calls upon the English community in the suburbs, just as though nothing unusual had occurred. In vain the Taotai ordered the grain junks to put to sea. Alcock instantly informed the masters that they would be stopped by the *Childers*, and the junkmen dared not move.

Still the local authorities did not give up the game. They brought people to personate the criminals; they tried to pass the Government grain out, covered with straw and bricks, and when detected and turned back, they sent down empty junks, and then tried to load them in the reach below the blockade. It was all of no use. Commander Pitman boarded every boat in the river and let not a grain of rice go out. Delays, excuses, and sham arrests of pretended criminals went on for some days, and at last the Consul played his trump card. He sent his Vice-Consul with Parkes on H.M.S. *Espiègle* to the Governor-General at Nanking, with a demand that he would at once see justice executed.

If the stoppage of the Imperial supplies had alarmed the Foochow mandarins, the daring mission of a British man-of-war to Nanking caused a panic. There was no more evasion. The Provincial Judge himself arrived. Ten prisoners were caught, identified, placed in the cangue, and ordered to be thus exposed daily for a month on the Bund as a public warning. Reparation had at last been effected, and after fifteen days' strict blockade of the port, the *Childers* permitted the 1400 imprisoned junks to depart in peace.

It was a signal triumph—a triumph that restored our credit at the Treaty ports, which had been seriously weakened by recent outrages,—a triumph, it should be added, that was won by Consul Alcock at his own risk. Had he been within reach of rapid instructions from his superior at Hongkong his vigorous measures would have been emasculated, and the Chinese would have gained the day. Mr Bonham had just succeeded Sir John Davis as Plenipotentiary, and whatever his private views may have been he started his official career with a very sharp curb from the Home Government. Lord John Russell's cabinet were obviously alarmed at Sir John Davis's high-handed proceedings in the Canton river in April 1847, after the Chesney expedition, and feared another China war. The Colonial Secretary, Earl Grey, nothing loth to reverse Lord Palmerston's policy, accordingly (24th November 1847) 'peremptorily forbad any further offensive operations to be undertaken against the Chinese without the previous sanction' of the Government. With this instruction on his table, it may readily be conceived with what alarm the new Plenipotentiary received Mr Alcock's announcement of his daring measures. Fortunately the telegraph—the curse of diplomatic responsibility—had not been introduced in those days, and Mr Alcock finished his business in a thoroughly complete and satisfactory manner before his superior's instructions were able to check him.

Parkes's share in these energetic measures was of course subordinate, but essential. Neither Consul nor Vice-Consul spoke Chinese, so he had to conduct all the interviews with the local authorities, draw up the notifications and official letters, and generally act as

go-between; and one may shrewdly suspect that he did not limit his share to mere interpretation. He was also sent up the river by himself on a risky reconnaissance to Tsingpu to discover what strength of junks lay there, with a view to 'ulterior measures.' Finally on 20th March he accompanied the Vice-Consul on the *Espiegle* to Nanking, and there conducted, as interpreter, the negotiations with the Governor-General. It was an important mission, and (so far as they knew) the safety and honour of the British community might depend upon their success. As the *Espiegle* went up the Yang-tsze, the various mandarins holding authority at places on the way came on board to pay their compliments and ask questions, and Parkes had to receive and answer them alone, as the Vice-Consul thought it best to reserve himself for the Viceroy. Some of them brought sealed instructions from the latter to ascertain the object of their mission, but as the letters contained the term 'barbarian' applied to foreigners they were ignored and their bearers were requested to leave the ship.

At Nanking the Viceroy not only made no objection to their demand for an interview, unprecedented as it was, but actually consented to receive them in his own yamen or official residence, standing and bowing over the Consul's letter, and generally displaying elaborate courtesy. He objected, however, to the demand that the Provincial Treasurer, a very high functionary indeed, should be sent to Shanghai, 'on the plea that that officer could never be detached from his office nor even be employed on any other but his financial affairs. But Mr Parkes adduced precedents to prove the contrary, which doubtless materially tended to gain the

object in view, for the Viceroy was obliged to relinquish this argument; the Treasurer duly visited Shanghai, and, it should be added, displayed the utmost fairness in arranging what remained of the difficulty.

The polite Viceroy's report to the Emperor on the subject of the mission to Nanking told a very different story, and is a delightful example of the Chinese method of cooking facts. From this it appears that 'three English barbarians' had gone to Tsingpu 'in defiance of Treaty regulations,' and there had 'a quarrel and fight' with the junkmen, in which they received 'some trifling wounds.' The Magistrate not having seized many of the culprits, Alcock had 'appointed a barbarian chief to proceed in a small barbarian vessel' to Nanking 'to make accusation and complaint.' The report recites the measures taken to preserve order, and the sending of the Provincial Judge to Shanghai, and mentions that the British ship had shown only peaceable intentions, had but a small number of men, and had landed none on their way. As it was 'but a solitary vessel that had come to state a grievance, the officers and soldiers in garrison at the various ports were all of them unwilling to attack her with their thundering cannon,' especially as the English 'were exceedingly respectful.' The report relates the discussions with 'Interpreter Parkes,' according to the Chinese version, and says that the Viceroy had removed the offending Taotai, who 'had been wanting in proper fear and promptness,' and at the urgent desire of the barbarians had sent the Treasurer to inquire further into the matter, conjointly with the Provincial Judge. 'At the same time I gave them a reply and bestowed upon them some provisions, at

which the said chiefs were all rejoiced and satisfied, and Chin-peh-ling and others were again deputed to immediately escort them out of the port.' He sends this memorial by swift express, lest 'the appearance of the barbarian chiefs at the provincial city to make accusation and complaint may have caused anxiety in the sacred breast.'

In sending in his report of these transactions the Vice-Consul concluded thus:—

'I have now the pleasing duty to convey my deep sense of the services rendered during this mission by Mr Parkes, to whose exertions, tact, and zeal its successful termination is chiefly due, and I only hope that if in the course of my career in the public service in China I am again placed in communication with the authorities on matters of a similar nature, I may have the benefit of his valuable assistance. It is easy to speak well of the exertions of an officer in a general way, but it is not so easy to express the particular opinion you may entertain of the way in which those services are rendered, and, above all, of the tact and good sense brought to bear on the occasion. I beg, therefore, you will take my simple assertion that, if our communications with the Viceroy at Nanking have been effected in a manner worthy of our position in China, to Mr Parkes chiefly is due the success attending my endeavours on that point.'

This generous testimony to his services was confirmed by the great men at Hongkong and Downing Street. Bonham reported the 'conspicuous and creditable' part played by the young Interpreter in the crisis, and Palmerston acknowledged that it had been 'very able and judicious.' A signal opportunity had presented itself, and Parkes had not let it slip. He had made his mark, not merely at the Consulate, nor only with

the authorities at Hongkong, but in the Foreign Office. From this time we may date his steady progress. He was a marked man, and the keenest of watchful masters, Lord Palmerston, had his eye upon him. Nor was this an epoch only in his official career: it was a crisis in his ideas. To have gone through that strenuous fight with Chinese double-dealing and obduracy was a notable step in the education of the future Consul. He had fearlessly shared in Alcock's spirited policy, and seen the effects of courage and determination upon the Chinese. All along he had advocated a firm method of dealing with the arrogance of the mandarins, and now the policy had been fairly put to the test and had proved triumphant. Henceforward there was no doubt or hesitation in Parkes's mind as to the line to pursue towards the Chinese bureaucracy. He had taken their measure and knew precisely how and where to plant the blow when blows were needed. He had proved conclusively that the only way to gain respect in China is to *command* it.

In April 1848 Parkes had received the appointment of Interpreter (not merely Acting Interpreter) at Shanghai; but in July of the following year he was named Interpreter at Amoy. Before taking up his new (or, rather, old) post he obtained leave to go home. He had long looked forward to seeing England again, and his services during seven eventful years fully entitled him to a furlough. When he returned, it was no longer to serve under Consul Alcock, who had been a wise master and a firm friend to him for five years. The accidents of the service took them in different directions, and though they came together again in later times, it was not in the old relation of chief

and subordinate. How valuable had been those five years of discipline under a judicious leader has been abundantly shown in the preceding pages; and that the Consul fully appreciated the other side of the relationship, and duly appraised the important services rendered to him by his intrepid young aide-de-camp, was proved by the despatch addressed to the Plenipotentiary at Hongkong on the termination of Parkes's connexion with the Consulate at Shanghai, in which, after reciting, as examples of his 'zeal and aptitude' and his 'ability, tact and ready fluency in the language,' the successful erection by the Chinese authorities at Amoy, of the first British Consulate ever built in China, and the exaction of the indemnity for the riot at Foochow, Mr Alcock concluded:—

'The value of his services at Nanking have already been fully recognized by Her Majesty's Secretary of State and your Excellency. And in reference to all these cases I need hardly say that although the Interpreter acts under the orders of others as to the steps to be taken in any negotiation, and the arguments and tone to be adopted, very much must of necessity depend upon the discretion, temper, and command of language in the Interpreter, and that if he is deficient in any one of these, the best-directed efforts of a Consul may be rendered nugatory. I cannot therefore but feel greatly indebted for the effective assistance I have at all times received from Mr Parkes, who has been with me from the first day of my taking office in this country, and take the warmest interest in his prospects.'

CHAPTER VI

HOME

1849-1851

THERE is nothing an officer in the East prizes so much as his leave home; and yet the change is seldom so enjoyable in fact as in anticipation. He looks forward to rest and the society of old friends, and he finds his friends away or dead, and his time spent in hurried movements from place to place. Instead of feeling at home, he becomes almost *dépayssé*, and he is not sorry when the hour comes for him to step on board the steamer and return to the old familiar office. But Harry Parkes was too young to feel this yet. He had left England before he had grown to really know her, and he longed to see her again and learn her beauty and her friendliness. He had passed from Birmingham to London, and from London to China, and had seen almost nothing of his native land. Now, he promised himself a thorough tour of exploration, and he determined not only to journey over England, Scotland, and Ireland, but to make himself acquainted with as much as he could of Europe, and in short to see the world at large as far as it could be seen in a year and a half of busy idleness. For his idleness was a mere name; he did not know how to be really idle; and lotus eating was

a branch of gastronomy which, to his loss, he never mastered. He took his holiday, like his work, hard.

His journey home was an exhausting course of sightseeing. He made his first considerable pause at Point de Galle, in October 1849; whence he drove in the old red coach of those days to Colombo and Kandy, delighting in the exuberant verdure of beautiful Ceylon. Then he crossed India in a 'transit-coach' drawn by bullocks, stopping at officers' quarters on the long journey from Madras to Calicut, where he found a steamer to take him up the coast to Bombay. Sir Henry Pottinger had given him introductions, and he found a welcome wherever he went. After being presented to Lord Falkland, the Governor, at Bombay, he sailed for Suez, rode across to Cairo on a camel, sailed down the Mahmudiya canal to Alexandria in four days, disdaining the steamer, and reached Marseilles on 18th March 1850. His first enthusiasm on setting foot in England received a slight check:—

'Arrived at Folkestone, I hurried to the best chop-house I could see, and ordered an English beef-steak with potatoes and ale as concomitants. I was in such good spirits on finding English ground under my feet that I did not like to lose the pleasure of feeling that I was standing on it by sitting down, and I gave a cheer as I swallowed English beef, English ale, and English potatoes—though to tell you the truth, though a secret, the former was ill-cooked and the latter were underdone, owing doubtless to my hurry to obtain possession of the viands. But though I praised them and called them excellent, the insidious things waited until I got into the railway carriage, and then disagreed with me. The ale, however, was really a treat. There is no resemblance I declare between the fresh liquor and the bottled-up fermentation that we get in China.'

In London he tried to crowd an impossible amount of sight-seeing and social and intellectual life into one season. He attended Faraday's and Baden Powell's lectures at the Royal Institution, worked a good deal at French, and took lessons in dancing. With his keen appetite for improvement, he got a Balliol man to draw up a scheme of reading for him, but found it was impossible to carry out any systematic course of study in the midst of the interruptions and engagements of his first London spring. His experiences of town lodgings were bewildering. He took rooms near Hanover Square, to be handy for his club, the Oriental, but left them hastily when he found that a peculiar sooty dust came in whenever he opened his windows. Such a phenomenon was unknown at Shanghai, and he concluded that something was wrong with the street. His next lodgings, however, only enlarged this extraordinary experience, and he began to make inquiries of scientific persons, who kindly explained that he had made the acquaintance of the celebrated London 'blacks.'

Another difficulty was the want of space in ordinary lodgings. He had been accustomed to expand his belongings in spacious airy rooms in China—not perhaps very substantially built, but ample and capacious; and whenever he wanted anything done, any furniture moved, or baggage packed and carried away, there was always his Chinese 'boy' ready to do the work. In Princes Street all this was changed, and he wasted a quantity of time and energy before he became at all accustomed to the altered conditions of existence. His lodgings became choked with the packing cases of Chinese curiosities, which he had innocently ordered

to be sent there, and he was busily employed for days in giving them away, to clear a space to stand in. Even his own necessary belongings spread too much, and had to be repacked. 'This constant packing is a slight drawback to the pleasure of my travel. Then no *coolies* to help pack or to walk off with the packages when packed with merely a *chit*—no, the attendance of waggons and of self to every particular is necessary here, and becomes very tedious. Then the P. P. C. calls, perfectly dreadful, and alone sufficient to prevent me renewing one half of my acquaintances on my return to London.' 'Altogether,' he sums up, 'my life is an odd jumble: much comes before me, of which I trust I may digest a little.'

The authorities at the Foreign Office were not slow to take notice of the promising young Interpreter whose name had figured conspicuously more than once in the dispatches from Hongkong. They were anxious to have a fresh opinion from one who had proved himself well acquainted with the problems of the China question. Among others Parkes was fortunate in making a strong impression upon Edmund Hammond. People used to say that Hammond was the embodied idea of the Foreign Office. He had joined it in 1824, when a young Fellow of University College, Oxford, and after serving under Sir Stratford Canning in one or two missions, became a fixture in Downing Street, where he was the best-known and grew to be perhaps the most influential figure for several decades. In 1854 he was promoted to be permanent Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and he kept his post till his retirement in 1873, when fifty years of prodigious labour were recognized by his elevation to the peerage. Foreign

the while for a friendly ear wherein to pour his impressions of all these new and wonderful sights:—

‘I had an exceedingly pleasant time of it (he wrote to Mr Lockhart, 23rd November), rather lonely though at times from want of companions and ignorance of the languages. Still I saw a good deal, and the retrospection will always give me pleasure. My fourteen days in Switzerland were the pleasantest time. Such a noble country! The air of the mountains is so invigorating. I wish I had more of it, it did me so much good. Such glorious fun scrambling over the snows and glaciers which you meet with everywhere when you get high up, and I was several times at an elevation of upwards of 10,000 feet. When the trips were at all perilous the excitement was doubled.’

He went in November or December to visit his childhood’s home, Birchhills, which he had not seen since 1833, and found the same Incumbent and his wife at Bloxwich who had been there when he was a child. And there he stood by his parents’ grave:—

‘During my stay in England nothing has given me more real pleasure than this meeting of mine with Mr and Mrs Baylie. Birchhills is sadly altered. Pits and iron-works of all descriptions almost touch the house, or rather the remains of it, two-thirds of it having been taken down. . . . I did not at first recognize the place, but on close inspection I detected a few traces, such as the grassy sward in front of the dining-room, still intersected by the ditch in which I was one day nearly drowned. . . . All the trees and gardens are entirely removed, and the place is now desolate and melancholy.’

So the hard-worked holiday passed away, and in January 1851 he set sail on his return to China. The year had not been wasted. He had gathered a fund of ideas which would serve him well for the long

months of lonely meditation in Chinese Consulates. He had made many new friends, and had come to know a little of the native land he loved so well and had left so early, as well as of the nations around.

Of his residence at Amoy in 1851 there is little record; indeed he hardly resided there at all. He was at Canton part of the year; then at Formosa, distributing rewards to the Chinese for assistance rendered to the crew saved from the wreck of the *Larpent*; in November he was at Shanghai with the Lockharts, and only left for Amoy on the 29th. There he performed the feat of catching a Taotai, already described; and at the close of the year received his appointment to be Interpreter at Canton. The 'key of the whole difficulty' of European relations with China at last was within his grasp; but it was not yet ready to be turned.

CHAPTER VII

CANTON

1852-1854

WHEN Harry Parkes took up the duties of Interpreter at the Consulate at Canton, he entered upon a new phase in his relations with the Chinese. Canton was the residence of the Imperial High Commissioner, who, under the Emperor, exercised the supreme control over all relations with foreigners at the five Treaty Ports. It might be expected that the necessary business connected with consular work would be conducted with special facility at the city where this high official resided, and that difficulties, such as were constantly arising from the negligence, incapacity, or fanaticism of the minor officials, Taotais, Haifangs, Che-hiens, and the rest, at other ports, would be wholly removed by direct contact with one of the most powerful, capable, and best-informed Ministers of the Empire. The Commissioner at Canton was always a picked man, carefully chosen for his ability, and he might be supposed to be above the petty jealousies and sordid motives of the inferior officers at the northern ports. It might reasonably be predicted that our relations with so intelligent and responsible a statesman would be conducted almost upon those principles of equality and mutual respect which prevail in European diplomacy.

There is nothing more fallacious than to argue Chinese matters from European premises. What seems obvious enough here, is wholly preposterous there, and it would be easy to draw up a portentous list of blunders committed by English representatives merely because they imagined that what was logic in Europe was also logic in China. Again and again sensible men sent out from Downing Street to manage affairs at Hongkong have predicted with every apparent probability that certain steps would be followed by certain results, and again and again they have proved wrong. The one link missing in their reasoning was a knowledge of the Mandarin character, and that one unknown quantity upset all their calculations. In this way it happened that, contrary to all reasonable expectation, Canton, instead of being the accessible centre of a wise and statesmanlike policy, was the headquarters of fanaticism, arrogance, and duplicity,—the focus of the anti-foreign feeling in China. After all, it was not so difficult to understand how this came about. Our mistake—the mistake of our Foreign Office and its agents who had not had experience of China—lay in imagining that the Chinese Government was honestly desirous of carrying the Treaty of Nanking into effect. With our limited European ideas, when Russia had not yet enlightened us upon the Oriental view of State engagements, we jumped to the conclusion that treaties were made with the intention of being observed. Nothing could have been further from the Chinese view of the matter. So long as our men-of-war were menacing their coast, and our soldiers were quartered in Chusan and Koolangsoo, the obligations imposed by Treaty were grudgingly carried out. But the moment

the restraint of an armed occupation was withdrawn, the Chinese returned to their old policy of pretentious arrogance and exclusiveness. As Dr (afterwards Sir John) Bowring, who was in temporary charge of the Superintendency of Trade in China during the absence of Sir George Bonham in 1852, wrote in his dispatch to Lord Clarendon of 19th April 1852: *—

'The Pottinger Treaties inflicted a deep wound upon the pride, but by no means altered the policy, of the Chinese Government. They were submitted to as a hard necessity. The motive which influenced our negotiations was the removal of the barriers which prohibited intercourse with the vast Empire of China, and the establishment and gradual expansion of friendly commercial relations with its multitudinous inhabitants. We sought to enable our merchants to avail themselves of the immense resources and the extraordinary producing and consuming powers of China, and to offer in return to the people of China all the advantages of an honourable and lucrative commerce. But this object never met with the concurrence or found the co-operation of the Chinese authorities. Their purpose is now, as it ever was, not to invite, not to facilitate, but to impede and resist, the access of foreigners. This policy is impressed upon all the high officers of the Empire, associated, however, with the most stringent commands to avoid collisions with foreign nations, and to take care that the public peace shall not be disturbed. These two conditions constitute the basis of the Imperial instructions to all the functionaries of the State, as regards their relations with strangers.'

Canton, the centre of our relations with China, was the most rigidly exclusive of all the Treaty ports. By the Treaty of Nanking, Article II.,—

* *Parl. Papers*, 1857 [C. 1173], Correspondence relative to Entrance into Canton, p. 3-9.

'The Emperor of China agrees that British subjects, with their families and establishments, shall be allowed to reside, for the purpose of carrying on their mercantile pursuits, without molestation or restraint, at the cities and towns of Canton, Amoy, Foochowfoo, Ningpo, and Shanghai; and the Queen of Great Britain will appoint superintendants or consular officers to reside at each of the above-named cities or towns.'

In all the other four ports the Consul had his residence within the city; but at Canton neither he nor any other foreigner, not even Her Majesty's Plenipotentiary, was admitted within the gates. The foreign 'factories' were outside, on the river bank, and the European community was restricted to the very narrow limits of the garden in front of the buildings. The restriction was objectionable in many ways. It diminished our officers' chance of meeting the several mandarins within the city who enjoyed the privilege of direct correspondence with the Emperor, and thus it withheld us from that close touch with the Government which the Treaty aimed at creating. It gave the Chinese a triumphant sense of superiority to see our consuls vainly demanding to be admitted to the great southern capital. And—a minor objection—it made the lives of our countrymen extremely uncomfortable, by hampering their movements, and making a walk or a ride next to impossible.

The Chinese authorities did not dispute our right to establish a Consul within Canton, just as we had established one at Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo, and Shanghai; but they tried their utmost to postpone the execution of the clause, on the ground of the inveterate hostility of the Cantonese to foreigners and the consequent danger of a riot and possibly murder. It must be

remembered that Canton had been for centuries the one point of contact with Europeans, and that during all that time it had witnessed nothing but a long series of humiliations and injuries inflicted upon the 'barbarians,' and borne by them with a humble resignation that could only inspire contempt on the part of the rabble. Contempt and hatred had been displayed in various ways since the war. Every year instances occurred of insults and violence offered to Europeans, including even consular officers. The foreign community lived in dread of an outbreak of fanaticism, and the merchants kept their books and papers packed in preparation for instant flight. It was not safe to enter a Chinese boat on the river. One could not walk through the suburbs in order to reach the open country without having foul words and very probably stones cast at one. It was impossible to make a short expedition up the river, within the limit of time prescribed by the Regulations, without running the risk of assassination. A long series of unprovoked outrages, rising now and then to brutal murder, had taught the Europeans at the factories to be careful how they ventured outside, and he was accounted a daring man who risked a five-mile walk from the Consulate.

The city was frequently placarded with broadsides calling upon the people to resist the 'schemes of usurpation' of the 'barbarian merchants' who wished to enter the city: for 'the injuries, the deceits, the cruel deeds, the evil and wicked acts of the English resident barbarians are like the hairs of the head innumerable; . . . born and bred in noxious regions beyond the bounds of civilization, having the hearts of wolves, brutal faces, the visage of tigers, and the cunning of

foxes,' they meditate the conquest of the province, etc. These were the words of the 'literati and gentry' of Canton, and faithfully expressed their sentiments. Official tablets set up on arches recorded the triumph of the Cantonese in keeping the 'barbarian' outside the gates when the right of entry had been promised and evaded in 1849. And when Dr Bowring reported all this in 1852, and stated emphatically that the entrance into Canton was the main point,—the key that would unlock most of our difficulties with China,—he was sententiously rebuked by that most sapient of Foreign Secretaries, the Earl of Malmesbury. The question of the entrance into Canton had been pressed and dropped repeatedly during the ten years which had passed since the first China war, with the natural result that the Chinese had come to the conclusion that we could not enforce our right, and they had grown yearly more insolent and unyielding by virtue of success.

Such then was the position of affairs when Harry Parkes joined the Canton Consulate :—a people hostile and contemptuous to a point never experienced at the other ports; a high official who disdained to receive the Consul, and with whom, securely shut up within the city walls, our representatives were obliged to communicate by written messages; a city inaccessible to foreigners; a country-side where it was not considered safe to walk; a society limited to the merchant community of the factories and a few missionaries. It was not an enjoyable state of things, nor flattering to his national pride, and one is not surprised that he found it dull. A letter to his friend (afterwards the devoted Bishop of Melanesia), J. C. Patteson, of Feniton

Court, Honiton (dated Canton, October 27, 1852), gives an admirable picture of the conditions of life at Canton :—

‘This, though one of the two chief ports, is by no means the pleasantest residence. Under the old system, that is to say previous to the war, when British subjects in China were entirely under the thumb of the Chinese authorities, they were subjected to many vexations and restrictions which contributed in no small measure to the misunderstanding which followed and the subsequent declaration of hostilities. You would think that when we dictated our own Peace in 1842, one of the first things we should have done would have been to have removed these annoyances ; but by a very questionable policy we omitted to do this and have suffered material inconvenience in consequence. When the Treaty was being negotiated we consented to deny ourselves all access to the interior of China, and merely stipulated for the opening of four new ports, with liberty to travel a day’s journey (which in China does not exceed thirty miles) in their immediate vicinity for purposes of exercise and recreation. This and various other privileges are all obtainable at the new ports, but are denied us at Canton—this denial constituting in fact a serious infraction of our Treaty rights, which the British Government however very quietly submit to. Aware, however, of their own physical inability to enforce the denial of our privileges, the Chinese Government have done all in their power, as far as they could do so quietly and unobserved, to inflame the *people* of Canton against us, and thus therefore, although we have a perfect right to take jaunts into the country and breathe fresh air away from this crowded city, few attempt to avail themselves of it on account of the risk they incur by so doing ; for it is no uncommon thing here to be attacked, stoned, or fired at by villagers ; nay even in the very streets of the suburbs (within the city we are not admitted) we

are apt to be abused or even spit upon—in fact treated exactly in the same way as Franks, in the last century, were at Constantinople—the term “foreign devil” taking place of “dog of a Christian” as a general mode of abuse.

‘All the foreigners here live entirely apart from the people in several contiguous blocks of buildings called “the factories,” not *manufactories*, but a preservation of the old name for the residence of “factors” or merchants. These buildings are erected on the side of the river on which this city is situated, and between them and the water is an oblong square or garden, the circumference of which comprises exactly one mile, which forms the chief spot where the foreign community, numbering altogether upwards of two hundred individuals, take air and exercise. The open country is only approachable by way of the dense suburb, the streets of which are at all times disagreeable to traverse, and therefore few attempt the passage: the river therefore affords to the younger and the major portion of the community the principal means of exercise and recreation, and to this reason must be ascribed the really excellent show which we possess of boats of all descriptions, from the single-pair wherry to the six-oared cutter or gig. You who have often rowed on the Isis will no doubt appreciate our imitation of this fine amusement on the *Chu Kiang* or *Pearl River* as this stream is called—stream it is hardly fair to call it, for in the neighbourhood of Canton, fully forty miles from the sea, it is still a large expanse of water about five or six hundred yards in width. We get up very fair regattas, and one is on the point of coming off.

‘Life however is very monotonous here. I will give you a day of mine own as a specimen, which I take to be a fair specimen of that of most of the residents, allowing merely for the different nature of our occupations. I rise at daylight, say six o’clock, pound round “the garden” for an hour. Come in, dress, and have a

couple of hours with an old fusty mal-odorous teacher (Chinese), who strives hard to make me believe that Confucius (B.C. 600) was, and is at present (as he still lives in his works), the ruling genius of the world, and this dogma he continues to maintain despite an occasional reference on my part to one of our high-pressure river steamers (plying between this and Hongkong—one hundred miles hence), which by its shrill whistle and belching forth of steam seems, it appears to me, to furnish a tangible contradiction to the *Sien-Sang*'s argument. Having composed my muddled brains by breakfast, I descend to my office at ten, where I remain until four or five in the afternoon, occupied with a strange *mélange* of hieroglyphics and ships' manifests, Chinese and English vernaculars, and various matters at once political, commercial, and judicial—nothing, however, very intellectual or beneficial to one's understanding, but on the contrary so insipid that nothing short of a good pull on the river (which always follows) is sufficient to counteract their stagnant influences. Dinner at seven, and, if without any company, I have then a quiet evening, in which I am at liberty to have a little pleasant reading, or to take a peep by means of newspapers, etc., at what is doing in the busy Western World I have lately quitted. Our mode of life might be varied a little, if our community were of a more mixed description, but it is entirely composed of one class—merchants, and consequently the prevailing themes of conversation are mainly limited to the staples of their trade. English cloths and woollens are pitted against Chinese teas and silks, enlivened now and then with a dash of the sporting (or boating) topics of the place, which are still however redolent of "the shop" from the names given to the boats, such as *Pekoe*, *Caper*, *Gunpowder*, etc. Now you can fancy how dull such subjects must be to a man who has little or no interest in the articles in question, and who has only to draw a fixed amount of salary (minus Income Tax

and Superannuation Fund) on each quarter day. The officers of the vessels of war which we generally have lying in the port, two or three very secluded missionaries, and our own chaplain, are the only variations that our society admits of. By the way, as I think I referred in my last to the reverend gentleman who has hitherto been conducting the duties of chaplain, I will here mention the arrival of the party who has been appointed to fill the office from home, and whose ministry—judging from the only sermon he has yet preached—will I trust be a real blessing to the community. His doctrine, I am glad to observe, is deeply evangelical; he is young, and of very prepossessing manner and appearance. He has not been here a week, and I have been too busy to call upon him, so cannot tell you at which university he matriculated; his name is Gray.*

'I often wish,' he wrote a little later, 'that I could meet in this part of the world with a friend possessing superior intellect . . . one whose advice and information would induce me to be diligent in the pursuit of knowledge and careful to form my own character and mind.' In the absence of such a counsellor he studied Foster's *Decision of Character*, 'the point in which I am miserably weak and deficient'—a self-judgment of which his whole career is one long refutation.

With the exception of an occasional piratical scuffle, Canton had lately been abnormally quiet, and there was consequently little of political importance to be done. The general tranquillity of the city encouraged Parkes to indulge his love of exercise in walks which would have been exceedingly risky a year or two before, and he even ventured to arrange a picnic for

* The well-known Archdeacon J. H. Gray, author of an excellent work on China.

ladies at a monastery some miles out of Canton. It is true the sober merchants of the factories regarded these excursions with reprobation, and put them down to the wild humour of Christmastide: but that they should have been accomplished at all shows that the popular feeling against 'barbarians' had become less overtly hostile, or else that Parkes carried a special influence about with him. There was probably something of both, and there is no doubt that the hostility of the populace was engineered for political ends by the mandarins.

Parkes's principal work in the early part of his residence at Canton was the preparation of Government Reports—one on Coolie Emigration published in a China Blue-Book for 1853, and the other on the Russian Caravan Trade with China, which was printed in the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* for 1854. These and other reports were highly commended by Lord Clarendon, the Secretary of State, and their marked ability makes one regret that Parkes's intimate knowledge of the Chinese had not found more complete expression, and that he had written no book about the people among whom he spent so many years. But he never had time for literary work, and the process of composition was irksome to him. 'Oh, that I had the pen of a ready writer!' he exclaimed; 'what a deal more work I might do, and with so much more ease to myself.' His leisure at Canton was considerably restricted by the frequent absences of the Consul and Vice-Consul—who were always falling ill, or occupied at other places, or getting married, or home on leave. In the autumn of 1852, the spring of 1853, and again early in 1854, the Interpreter found himself in charge

as Acting-Consul at the most critical post in China, with only a single assistant to help him, and not always that. The temporary promotion, though of little importance from the point of view of salary, gave him opportunities of responsible work and possible distinction, and as such he was proud of the confidence placed in him. It also involved a number of disagreeable and novel duties, such as entertaining visitors, marrying 'nationals,' and presiding over the consular court, where lawyers practised for the first time in 1853, to the youthful Acting-Consul's secret alarm as he sat on the bench. We get a glimpse of these avocations in his letters to his sister:—

'I am now in charge here [he told Mrs Lockhart, March 10, 1853], as Dr Bowring has gone away on three months' leave of absence; but with only one assistant, and with an establishment of five reduced to two, we have our hands full. In my new capacity I shall have the honour of marrying the first English couple that [will] have been married in Canton. I must introduce you to the parties: Miss Augusta Fischer and Mr John Williams, tea-taster in Messrs Jardine, Matheson & Co. The engagement took place a fortnight ago, and I think they will be married in two or three weeks. Courtings and weddings have hitherto been entirely unknown here, although a belle has been resident here upwards of two years. This may be in consequence of the inconvenient nature of the place. Everything here is so very public, and we are so very close together, with doors and windows opening into each other's houses, that the necessary retirement is not obtainable. If you wish to make love, there is positively no place to do it in. You can never meet a young lady alone at home, and if you walk with her in the

garden it must be in the face of 275 witnesses, the number of the whole community. How Williams therefore managed the business I can't conceive.'

Nov. 10, 1853. 'I would have written you a respectable letter by this mail, had it not been for the old American Commodore Perry, who has visited Canton, and is slowly eating his way through a phalanx of dinners, one of which it fell to my lot to give yesterday, twelve persons at table. . . . If there is anything I cordially detest it is having to give a "tall feed," as my United States friends term it. I strive very hard to dine nine days out of ten by myself off a chop or steak, the deglutition of which occupies from ten to fifteen minutes. My servants quite approve of this habit of body, and are therefore as much put out as their master when occasion requires any gastronomic display. A dinner then gives me as much trouble as it does to old ladies at home; but I try to dodge the infliction by taking to my office at an earlier hour than usual, within which I forbid my servants to enter; not hesitating, however, with a most flagrant violation of justice, to hold them responsible for every thing that goes wrong.'

There were more critical subjects for consular activity in 1853 than marrying, or dining, or even sitting in the seat of judgment. The all-absorbing topic of conversation from March onwards was the attitude to be observed towards no less important an object than—the French Flagstaff. Wars frequently arise from microscopic causes. A flip with a fan led to the French conquest of Algiers; an American flagstaff suspected of causing a plague, produced a riot at Canton in 1844; and the forcible erection of a pole in the factory garden in 1853 nearly induced international complications with our sensitive neighbours. What Lord Stratford used to call, rather disdainfully, 'French

feelings of honour' were grievously lacerated by the rough and ready pugnacity of some of the younger merchants, and it needed all the young Consul's diplomatic skill to prevent an open rupture.

'I am just now breathing,' he wrote, July 6, 1853, 'after three or four months of great worry, out of which, however, I have, I believe, escaped scatheless. When the French flagstaff affair came up, considerable responsibility devolved upon me in consequence of the absence of Sir George Bonham in the North, leaving me alone in my glory, without a soul to refer to for instruction or advice; and from the circumstance of there being no other authority on the spot (for the Government at Hongkong could take no cognizance of anything happening at the ports) I had to assume a grave deportment and try to play the *diplomate* with a French Minister, a French Commodore, and half a dozen Consuls. . . . The French Minister, M. de Bourboulon, took it into his head to hoist a flagstaff in the garden in front of the factories, which the community conceived belonged to them and he maintained belonged to nobody. When about to erect it, the community interfered, thereupon M. de B. immediately landed a force of marines and accomplished the work by force. When these had retired some unknown parties cut on several occasions the rigging of the flagstaff: the marines therefore returned to protect it and armed sentries were placed in the garden. These sentries one fine night seized and carried off two English gentlemen who were walking in the garden. I hearing of the affair claimed their delivery into my charge, but the French officers refused to give them up and took them away as prisoners to the French man-of-war lying fourteen miles away. As soon as circumstances would admit I started after them, but when I reached the frigate they had been released. I however had to require an apology for the affront

offered to *my (! ! !) consular authority* in not delivering to me *my* subjects when I claimed them, and an examination into the causes of the arrest. The first was the most important point, and Commodore Roquen-carel, not liking it at all, hummed and hawed and twisted his moustache and took so long to consider about it that I had to write him a twister in the shape of a letter, which produced a tolerably satisfactory explanation from him and a very ample one from M. de Bourboulon. The examination then proceeded, and though from want of evidence and witnesses and great contradictions some points cannot be cleared up, the truth I think is that the young men did slightly misbehave themselves, and the sentries acted somewhat hastily. Be this as it may, however, the French made a great mistake that any amount of misbehaviour on the part of the young men will not extenuate—that of carrying off the latter as prisoners in violation of all international law, instead of handing them over to me for trial. If they had done wrong it was I only who could punish them, and not the Frenchmen. You may fancy what excitement all this occasioned in a secluded community like this. At one time I greatly dreaded that the matter would lead to much trouble, as several foolish young men paraded the garden with pistols in their pockets; but, thank God—I speak reverentially—the cloud blew over, and I prevailed on the Commodore to remove the obnoxious guard from Canton. Sir George when he returned from the North would do nothing in the matter—indeed there was little for him to do—[more] than approve of what I had done, and refer the whole affair [to the Foreign Office], where it will die a natural death, for Ministers have enough on their hands to attend to without coining international trouble out of an affair like this which sprang from a very paltry origin. Both Bourboulon and the community have committed faults, both have deeply

affronted each other, and the best they can do is to pocket what is past.'

Parkes had played a difficult game with considerable skill. He had to maintain the dignity of his nation and his office in face of an unwarranted infraction of both by the French, and he had to do this without committing himself on the crucial point of the right to erect or to pull down a flagstaff. He had managed to keep his own countrymen in order (which cannot be said of some other Consuls at the time) whilst he was imperilling his influence with them by maintaining courteous relations with the very Frenchmen who in the eyes of the community had committed an outrage. He steered his way among all these rocks and shoals with consummate firmness, prudence and tact, and not only retained the confidence of the community, by whom he was greatly valued and respected, but in the end received Lord Clarendon's warm approbation of the 'proper firmness and moderation' he had displayed throughout this irritating dispute. An ill-advised attempt of the Chief Superintendent to supersede him drew a sharp reprimand from the Foreign Office, and not only was Parkes confirmed in his post as Acting-Consul until the return of the real holder of the office in the autumn, when he was to act as Vice-Consul, but soon afterwards he received his appointment to be full (not merely acting) Consul at Amoy, '*as a special mark of the satisfaction with which Her Majesty's Government have watched your conduct in the public service.*'

The promotion was a gratifying recognition of his two years of severe and responsible service at Canton. The British residents, who had learnt to appreciate

him thoroughly, were very sorry to lose him, though they joined in cordial congratulations on his 'step.' He went away just before the Tai Ping rebels began to menace the city,—rather to his regret, no doubt, for he delighted to be wherever things were stirring,—and arrived at Amoy on 14th May 1854. His stay there was brief, for he was summoned South at the beginning of 1855, and there are but few letters preserved of this period; but it is clear that he was warmly welcomed by the community of his old post, who were proud to have him as their Consul. Amoy was much the same secluded spot that he had found it in his first residence there in 1844, though the trade of the port had improved. Its isolation during the N.-E. monsoon was petrifying. No news came in or went out with regularity, the monthly P. and O. steamer passed without calling, and all communications by sea were frequently closed. 'Letters that I send to Shanghai are brought back to me four or five weeks after date because vessels cannot make the passage. Letters from Hongkong reach me about the same time after date and tell us of movements of plenipotentiaries and other people already nearly as ancient as the intelligence that comes out from home. Sir John Bowring and the French and American Ministers are all gone up to Shanghai, bent, it is given out, upon some expedition to Peking;*' but although one would wish to watch intently any step of this kind, the echo of their doings will reverberate here with little more strength or speed than those of the Baltic Fleet'—the only reference, by the way, in Parkes's letters, to the Russian

* An abortive attempt to open direct communications with the central Government.

war, and a curious testimony to the isolation of his post. 'I wish them success,' he continues, 'most certainly, and that I were there to see; but Sir John's activity is somewhat akin to flightiness; he attempts too much, and consequently does too little. Fancy the news that Alexander Selkirk could have communicated to the other world, and you will then realize my position in respect to intelligence. Here there is nothing to worry, and naturally the other concomitant, nothing to interest one.'

CHAPTER VIII

THE SIAMESE TREATY

1855-1856

THE duties of Her Majesty's Plenipotentiary and Chief Superintendent of Trade at Hongkong were not limited to China. He represented his country at various minor courts of the Far East, and his functions included those of Plenipotentiary to the King of Siam. So far this office had been something of a sinecure, for Siam declined to have anything to do with foreign representatives. The United States of America and the Governor-General of India had vainly attempted to establish diplomatic relations, and when Sir James Brooke of Sarawak was commissioned to visit the Menam and arrange a Treaty in 1850, he was received with hostile demonstrations, and broke off all communications with the Siamese Government under circumstances which augured ill for the success of future essays in diplomacy.

Nevertheless, something had to be attempted. Siam possessed very considerable capabilities for trade, but a suicidal system of monopolies and a total absence of security for foreign traders crushed the spirit of commercial enterprise, so that in 1855 there were but two vessels engaged in foreign trade. A hope of improvement had been raised by the accession of a new king, who gave promise of a less exclusive policy.

Phra Bard Somdetch Phra Paramendr Maha Mongkut, the Major or First King of Siam, (for there was, at least in name, a dual sovereignty,) was a singularly enlightened man, eager to improve his country, and personally devoted to the pursuit of knowledge. He had studied Latin under the French Catholic Propaganda, and learned English from the American Mission, besides devoting years to Sanskrit and Pali. He was a great reader, as well as a genuine student, and when he was tired of his scientific researches he took to the works of Sir Walter Scott, whose name he had given to one of his steamers. Mechanical science and engineering became the rage in Bangkok, and English was read and spoken by several of the princes and Government officials.

This phenomenon among Eastern potentates had corresponded with Sir John Bowring, who, it must be remembered, was a man of information first and a diplomatist afterwards. The King was attracted by Sir John's 'European reputation,' and if he had not read his edition of Jeremy Bentham or his treatise on the Decimal System, his naturally inquiring and learning-loving mind could hardly fail to be impressed by the magic letters after the name of a Plenipotentiary who not only signed himself LL.D., but could append the initials of thirty societies.* The king of Siam could not be expected to appreciate the honorary membership of the 'Schleswig - Holstein Lauenburgische Gesellschaft,' the 'Hull Literary Association of the Friends of Poland,' or even the 'Ancient Order of Foresters,' at its exact scientific value; but Bowring,

* See the amusing list on p. 404 of Bowring's *Autobiographical Recollections*.

with all this tag of diplomas, and with a very considerable amount of varied acquirements, represented to him the learned man of Europe, and as such King Mongkut was glad to correspond with him, and would even consent to receive him officially, if the prejudices of his Ministers could be overcome. There is no doubt that the doctor's gown (of Groningen) in which Bowring used to astonish the natives in China had a good deal to do with the success of his Siamese Treaty. A mere diplomatist or officer would not have appealed to the imagination of the literary king with anything approaching the majesty of this Admirable Crichton clothed in the flowing garments of an honorary doctor of letters of the University of Groningen.

An official visit was accordingly arranged early in 1855, and in order not to alarm the Siamese, Sir John Bowring consented to waive the splendid naval display which he had contemplated and to approach the Menam with but two vessels of war. One of these conveyed his Excellency and his secretaries Harry Parkes and J. O. Bowring. In spite of confident predictions of failure the Mission proved a conspicuous success. Obstacles of all sorts were at first placed in the way of the diplomatists by the 'old and crusted' Siamese party, but one by one these were overcome, and after three weeks' hard negotiation the Treaty was actually signed on 18th April 1855. How far this happy result was due to the skill of Harry Parkes may be read here and there between the lines of Sir John Bowring's journal, published in his *Kingdom and People of Siam*. Parkes was sent on to Bangkok in advance of the Plenipotentiary, and conducted all the preliminary negotiations, upon which the success of the Mission

mainly depended. Parkes had to explain what was wanted, to remove the suspicions and prejudices of the Ministers, to show how each point he suggested would affect the commerce and local authority of the Siamese, to make them understand consular rights and extra-territorial jurisdiction, and in short to pave the way for a reasonable Treaty with people who were ignorant of the very principles of such covenants. He had to do this under considerable difficulties. The prejudices of the leading Ministers were against him ; the interpretation through Chinese into Siamese was complicated ; and efforts were made to restrict his personal freedom and to prevent communication with the Americans at the capital.

All these were overcome. Every detail that could conduce to the dignity of the Mission and its solemn reception by the King was insisted upon and carried, and it was made perfectly clear to the Siamese that they had to do with people who would not suffer an affront. Sir John Bowring indeed grew despondent and began to doubt whether he should not have to go away without a Treaty : 'I doubt,' he wrote in his journal, 'whether any good will be done, and I am more out of spirits than I expected to be. The King is a man no doubt wonderfully self-instructed, but that he should appreciate the great truths of political science one could hardly expect.' Whilst the disciple of Bentham was grieving over his Majesty's inadequate appreciation of these 'great truths,' however, the King was doing his best to overrule his Ministers' objections, which Parkes was daily combating during long hours of keen discussion ; and the result of the good-will of the one and the perseverance of the other was that a

very sensible commercial Treaty was drawn up and signed, in spite of the forebodings of the Plenipotentiary and the neglect of the 'great truths.' Of course Bowring had the last word in the matter, and in the final arrangements he took an active and authoritative part: but due credit must also be given to his first secretary for the conduct of the difficult and delicate preliminaries and *pourparlers* without which the Treaty would never have been concluded.

It is true that even a doctor's gown could not completely hide the Minister's sword, and the Mission very nearly came to an untoward end when it was discovered that Siamese monarchs had a rooted objection to receiving people with swords. The King was accustomed to see all his courtiers, clothed chiefly in orange paint, crawling on all fours in his august presence, and it took all the doctor's learned eloquence to explain that Ministers' and naval officers' swords were just as much part of their dress as the turmeric with which Siamese aristocrats decorated their skins. Then another difficulty was raised. The King would not hear of a salute of twenty-one guns: it would frighten the Bangkokians out of their wits. Parkes explained, however, that it was physically impossible for a British man-of-war to come within hail of Majesty without exploding in this fashion, and the salute was finally conceded. Then it was proposed to receive the Plenipotentiary with the condescending ceremony proper to the humble envoy of the neighbouring State of Pegu; till Parkes luckily discovered a precedent in an embassy of Louis XIV to Siam, and made it clear that Sir John was the representative of a much greater Sovereign even than the Grand Monarque.

So eventually the doctor was received in full state in an audience crammed with crawling nobles, and accommodated with a high seat near the King, who, robed in blue satin, and surrounded by courtiers (heraldically) *passant*, described the presents for the Queen, which were enclosed in a box with a letter of his own composition written on gold leaf in Siamese and English with his own hand, and added, 'Now as I wrote to Her Majesty, Her Majesty will of course write to me.' A gold key to the box was then delivered to Parkes, to be conveyed to the Queen, and the box of presents was triumphantly carried on a golden throne borne by eight men, surrounded by an escort of officers, and played out by the royal orchestra, to the barge which conveyed the Plenipotentiary back to his ship.

The Treaty was signed on the 18th April, and Parkes was sent home with it, to obtain the Queen's ratification and to deliver the King of Siam's letter and presents to Her Majesty. On 9th July he was very graciously received by the Queen at Buckingham Palace, and explained to Her Majesty the result of the Mission to Siam.

The next six months were spent in England, but not in idleness. The Foreign Office wanted a quantity of information on Chinese affairs, and now that it had Parkes at hand to refer to, it did not readily let him go. Several of his successes at Amoy and Canton had been very favourably viewed at the Office, and the young Consul was now recognized as an authority whose opinion was worth consulting. There were a number of minor points to be cleared up, and no one could do it so well as Harry Parkes. Instead of enjoying a holiday he found himself nailed to the desk, writing

reports and opinions; and if he managed to run away into the country for a brief change of air, he was sure to be recalled by an impressive envelope 'On Her Majesty's Service.' It was flattering to so young a man to be treated as a Chinese oracle, and these six months in London formed an epoch in his career. The impression he had produced upon the permanent officials, and especially upon Hammond, who was now Under-Secretary, was confirmed and strengthened, and he had many opportunities of improving his relations not only with them but with his Chief, Lord Clarendon, and even the Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston, himself.

This constant strain of work for the Office told seriously upon his health. He had come home looking far from well. 'He has altered much,' said his sister, Mrs Lockhart, 'and looks so fair and white and bleached: he thinks every one in England looks so ruddy.' An attack of fever at Singapore had greatly reduced his strength, and he complained of perpetual weariness and back-ache. He stood much in need of quiet and rest in the country, but he did not succeed in getting away from town and the 'insatiable requisitions of the Foreign Office' till September, when he went with his sister to Scotland, and read a paper on Siam before the British Association at Glasgow. He visited Arran with Sir Roderick Murchison and other members of the Association, and made a tour in the Highlands, as far as Blair Athole, pursued by official papers all the way. After a few days at Edinburgh he determined to spend three weeks at Malvern, and try what hydropathy would do for him, if the Office would leave him in peace. Of course it would not, for the presents for the King of Siam had

to be bought, and no one but he had the least idea how to suit the tastes of that unfamiliar monarch ; so to London he was called. In December he read some 'Notes on Siam' before the Royal Geographical Society.

The change of scene and some walking exercise did him good ; but there was another cause to account for his improved looks and spirits towards the close of the year. Among the houses where he was sure of an affectionate welcome was Stanmore Hall, near Edgware, the home of Mrs Robert Hollond, a friend of the Alcocks. In the intellectual circle which Mrs Hollond loved to gather round her Harry Parkes found the mental stimulus which he had long sighed for in vain in China, and his appreciative hostess had so thoroughly taken the eager *spirituel* young man to her heart that she delighted to call herself his 'mother.' Among the friends who came to Stanmore few were dearer to Mrs Hollond than the family of her neighbours, the Plumers of Canons, Edgware. Their grandfather, Sir Thomas Plumer, had been Master of the Rolls ; their father, like the elder Harry Parkes, had been killed with appalling suddenness in a street accident. The widow and her children never quite recovered from the shock ; it broke up the brightness of their lovely and loving home. They lived at Canons, not in the great house which was occupied by their grandmother, Lady Plumer, but in a lodge within the park, a very charming home ; and here they became fast friends with Mrs Hollond. One especially among the daughters drew forth her closest sympathy. At the time of her father's sudden death Fanny Plumer, his fifth girl, was just of age.

' She was a beautiful girl [writes an intimate friend of

Mrs Hollond's], tall, well-proportioned, and graceful, her colouring rich and soft, her features expressing sensitiveness and the power of warm emotion ; her dark brown eyes full of intelligence and speaking earnestness of purpose. She possessed in a large degree the power of fascination in which all her family were remarkable. In a word one could not see and soon forget her. To Mrs Hollond her mind and character had an especial charm. She found in Fanny a kindred spirit, imbued, shall I say, with that sort of dissatisfaction with every-day life and small interests which spurs its possessor on to the acquirement of knowledge and gives a yearning for larger experience. Fanny had always been the industrious worker of the schoolroom : she came to be in after years the open-eyed observer of people and events.

'During the sad mourning time which succeeded the father's death, Fanny had many soothing periods of congenial intercourse with her friend. It happened that during one of her visits to Stanmore (she was accompanied at that time by her mother and one of her sisters) another young friend of Mrs Hollond's came to renew the acquaintance which he had made with her six years before. This was Harry Parkes, then come over from China. To Mrs Hollond this young man's presence was always a very great delight, and she welcomed him warmly and introduced him to her friends. Of the first meeting between the two whose lives were to be one, the mother said that she was startled at the effect which one evening in the company of Harry Parkes produced in her daughter. Fanny had in other cases been hard to please, critical, sensitive, reserved. Yet in a few hours on that day it seemed as if her heart opened and let the stranger freely in. The surrender on the other side was no less rapid and complete, and their friends had to be startled and a little critical over the hasty love-making and engagement.'

The lovers gave their friends no leisure to enjoy their surprise. Six weeks after the day they first met, Harry Parkes and Fanny Plumer were married on New Year's Day 1856, at Whitchurch, in the famous chapel where Handel used to play the organ to the splendid Duke of Chandos. Nine days later they started on their journey to the Far East. Two days they had allowed themselves for a pretence of a honeymoon; then the bridegroom was summoned to wait on the Queen at Windsor to take leave. On the 7th he was up writing all night for the Foreign Office, and the bride had not seen him all the day. On the 8th he wound up his work with a rush; and on the 9th they left England.

Their eventual destination was Canton, where Parkes was to take charge of the Consulate during Alcock's* absence, instead of at once returning to his own post at Amoy; but on his way he had to visit Siam once more, to exchange the ratifications of the Treaty, and to deliver the Queen's letter and presents. It was an important and responsible mission, and to a young bride who had seen nothing of the East the prospect of visiting the Siamese Court in all the dignity of official state was full of interest. But her husband would have gladly gone straight to his Consulate. He was still far from well, and the voyage had not removed all traces of his overwork in England. He confessed to languor and debility, and longed for the settled quiet of a home with his young wife. 'Life in a portmanteau,' he wrote, 'is certainly not the most pleasant.'

* Alcock had been transferred to Canton in June 1855, but returned to Shanghai in 1856. He was again at his post at Canton after the *Arrow war*.

It is pleasanter, however, than life without any portmanteau at all, which was what the travellers had to put up with when accident separated them from their baggage on their way to Alexandria, and all the necessaries of travelling in the tropics had to be bought, as best they could, in Egypt. Nor were the *contresmets* of the voyage over when, once more reunited to their possessions, they arrived at Singapore; for here they had to shift to the man-of-war which was to convey H.M.'s representative with becoming state to the kingdom of Siam, and in the transhipment the whole of the Queen's presents for the King of Siam went to the bottom of the sea. One would not have cared to have stood in the shoes of the peccant boatmen after this disaster, for Harry Parkes, with all his Christian qualities, was master of an 'unsanctified vocabulary' in moments of strong irritation; and after bringing the Queen's presents all the way to Singapore it was excessively disgusting to see them destroyed by the carelessness of a set of imbecile watermen. To have to appear before the King with three pitiful remnants of a drenched cargo was intensely mortifying: but there was no help for it, and to Siam the *Auckland* accordingly bore H.M.'s Consul and the relics of the Queen's gifts. They arrived off the bar of the Menam on the 12th March 1856, after a rough voyage in a rolling vessel. Mrs Parkes's journal gave a vivid picture of the Court and manners of the Siamese, which she observed with a woman's faculty for noticing details that often escape the attention of men.

Prince Kroma, the King's brother, particularly amused her,—'very ugly, his head is enormous, and the hair all shaved off with the exception of a top-knot,' well-waxed

and erect ; 'his face broad and fat, with high cheek-bones, flat nose, and a mouth extending from ear to ear and rendered more hideous by the horrible practice the Siamese have of chewing the betel-nut, which stains the teeth perfectly black.' He was nevertheless 'an agreeable, kind, old man, full of fun and jokes. How I wished I could have sketched him as he sat with nothing on but a cloth round his waist, grinning and smoking and chewing the betel-nut !' 'A number of his wives were introduced to me ; they were nearly all ugly and came crawling into the room on their hands and knees,' as is the etiquette in Siam for women and other inferiors in presence of their masters.

The ceremony of the formal reception of the Queen's letter was not unlike that described by Sir John Bowring on the occasion of the signing of the Treaty, but Mrs Parkes's description contains some quaint details :—

'Monday 31st at length arrived, and at about half-past eleven the procession to the Palace set out from the factory amidst the salute of twenty-one guns from the *Auckland*. The King sent down a magnificent boat, in which was a small throne with a vase on it for the Queen's letter, which thus travelled up in state ; he also sent a very splendid [boat] for Harry, who wore his Consul's dress. Then followed a guard of soldiers, attired in different curious uniforms, half European, half Siamese ; a band of music came next ; and then all the officers from the *Auckland* in full dress ; and numbers of boats filled with Siamese nobles brought up the rear. On reaching the landing-place at the Palace, which was thronged with thousands of Siamese, a salute was fired from the forts, the procession formed and walked under a triumphal arch which the King had caused to be erected with the words *Welcome Her*

Britannic Majesty inscribed on it. They proceeded immediately to the Grand Audience Hall, which was filled with nobles crouching upon the ground. The King was seated upon a throne twelve feet high in a kind of recess; he was magnificently dressed, and covered with jewels. Harry presented an address to him and then presented the letter, standing on a stool and the King bending down to receive it. He read it aloud in English, and in the midst called out "Mr Parkes, do you understand?" Of course Harry said he did perfectly, whereupon his Majesty looked pleased, for he prides himself much upon his knowledge of our language. He afterwards read it in Siamese. The silver inkstand was also then presented. After the audience, a dinner was given to the officers, served in English style, at which the King of course was not present.'

A grand entertainment signalized the exchange of the Treaties on April 5th. The Audience Hall was guarded by female soldiers, and sixty actresses, loaded with jewels and with silver finger-nails, and painted with turmeric and white powder, performed a marvellous play, full of recitations and songs and wild weird music.

'One thing amused me very much (adds Mrs Parkes). In a kind of balcony overlooking the court the King had caused a throne to be erected, whereon he placed the Treaty and the Queen's Letter, as a kind of representative to be present at the festivities, and as the King said "to do Her Majesty honour." We soon took leave of the Queen and returned to our seats. All round the court the highest nobles of the land were lying down, being always obliged to maintain that uncomfortable position before the King. I think the nobles ought to have their rank inscribed on them, for it is very difficult to tell a noble from a slave. Prince Choukiatia is the best specimen of a Siamese nobleman,

and is really gentlemanly in his manners. Unfortunately for him he can speak and write English, so the King keeps him constantly employed, and gives him a salary of about £10 a year. He told me that when he first learnt English "he like it, but now he hate it very much."

The exchange of the ratifications was not the end of the business, for there were various points of detail to be arranged before the Treaty could be fairly set on its legs. Parkes had many a stiff encounter with the Commissioners appointed to settle the working arrangements before he could induce them to come over to his way of understanding the various provisions. What these details were may be seen in the Supplementary Agreement signed 13th May 1856, which is published in Sir John Bowring's *Siam*. It is sufficient here to say that the main points related to the exportation of rice and salt, extraterritorial jurisdiction, the establishment of a custom-house (an institution hitherto unknown in Siam, where the farming system had been in vogue), the limits within which British subjects might build houses or purchase land, and the taxation to which they were liable. On each of these the Siamese evinced considerable obstinacy,—not unnaturally, since the provisions involved a complete change in the fiscal and revenue system of the country.

At last the work was really over ; the boundaries of British habitation were mapped out, with the skilled assistance of Commander Richards of the surveying schooner *Saracen* ; the consular jurisdiction was securely defined ; a custom-house was promised ; and on the 13th May the Supplementary Articles were signed, and Parkes was free to depart. Before he went an American mission had arrived, eager to participate

in the benefits obtained by the English Treaty, and very jealous lest it should not be received with the same honours which had been accorded to the British representative; and three months later the French concluded a Treaty which stood to the Bowring Treaty much as their Treaty of Whampoa stood to ours of Nanking: that is, they acquired all that we had gained, and added a little on their own score, rather to the annoyance of the First King. No sincerer flattery exists than imitation, and France and America paid an involuntary compliment to the arrangements concluded by Sir John Bowring and Harry Parkes in adopting them almost in identical terms. Local opinion expressed itself warmly in admiration of 'the great tact and zeal displayed by Mr Harry Parkes, to whose steady determination, remarkable courtesy, and unabated zeal, much of the success of the late negotiations must be attributed. The necessary explanations of the Treaty obligations were scarcely less difficult or delicate than the drawing up of the Treaty itself; and Sir John Bowring exercised a wise discretion in confiding that part of the negotiation to Mr Parkes, whilst the latter, with his usual candour and modesty, attributes the chief measure of his success to the spirit in which the First King conducted the diplomatic duties incidental to the mission.* Our own Foreign Office was well pleased with the success of the negotiation, and Lord Clarendon wrote officially (25th September 1856) that he had—

'much pleasure in signifying the entire approbation of your conduct on the part of Her Majesty's Govern-

* *Straits Times*, 10th June 1856.

ment. They are of opinion that you were perfectly right in protracting your stay at the Siamese Court until you could come to a complete and satisfactory arrangement with regard to the points of detail flowing out of the Treaty of 18th April 1855 ; and the ability, patience, and judgment which you displayed in your communications with the Kings of Siam and the Ministers are deserving of every commendation.'

The subsequent progress of Siam, in trade and in many of the improvements of European civilization, has fully borne out the wisdom of the policy which brought about the Treaty ; and recent events at Bangkok accentuate, by contrast, the skill and tact which marked the negotiations of 1855-1856. The eagerness of the Siamese princes to avail themselves of English educational advantages and to associate themselves with European interests, shows that the impulse which led to the friendly rapprochement of half a century ago is still powerful.

CHAPTER IX

THE LORCHA *ARROW*

1856

THE affair of the lorcha *Arrow* is among the two or three incidents in Chinese history which have fixed themselves in the memory of the public and disturbed their usual profound indifference to events in the Far East. The attack on the *Arrow* and its consequences formed the subject of a protracted debate in the House of Commons, ending in a vote of censure and a dissolution of Parliament. The incident thus acquired an historical importance far beyond its intrinsic significance. A single example of Chinese hostility became, in the popular imagination, the *belli teterrima causa*. With a superb disregard of the whole history of our relations with China, politicians seized upon this isolated contest and denounced it as the miserable pretext of a cruel and cowardly war; and Parkes, as one of the chief actors, came in for an ample measure of criticism. Thus the *Arrow*, by nature an unambitious vessel of commerce, sprang at a bound into unwonted notoriety, and carried Mr Consul Parkes with her into the full blaze of public opinion.

Into that searching light he was sure to come, whenever the *Arrow* or any other incident happened

to bring into strong relief the essential incompatibility of British and Chinese policy in China. Matters had long been working up towards a crisis. The day of reckoning for years of contumely had been postponed again and again by the weakness or timidity or mistaken leniency of English Foreign Ministers and Plenipotentiaries. Rights had been waived, and insults condoned ; but it was easy to foresee that things could not go on much longer as they had been allowed to drift, that a stand would have to be made somewhere, and that the scene of the struggle would be Canton.

In an earlier chapter we have seen that the great southern city was the headquarters of the anti-foreign policy ; that it was the only one of the Treaty ports where the provisions of the Treaty were set at nought ; the only port where the British Consul had no access to the Chinese authorities, and the British residents no security for life and property. When Parkes was stationed there in 1852-54, in a period of comparative tranquillity, he had been compelled to submit to a position which he felt to be intolerable, but which he had not the power to amend. In the interval, during his absence at Amoy, Siam, and England, matters had not improved at Canton. There had not been any serious outrages, but the new Imperial High Commissioner Yeh had carried out the exclusive policy of his predecessor Seu with even greater arrogance and obstinacy. We have seen how Bowring attempted as *locum tenens* in 1852 to convince the Government of the paramount necessity of compelling the Chinese to execute the Treaty of Nanking by throwing open the gates of Canton : and how sourly his enthusiasm

was damped by Lord Malmesbury, who bade him 'avoid all irritating discussions with the Chinese,' and 'abstain from mooting the question of the right of British subjects to enter into the city of Canton.'* But Bowring did not abandon his opinion: he merely postponed its execution. It was quite clear that the point which stood in the forefront of British policy in China was what was called the City Question, the right of entrance into Canton; and Bowring never lost sight of it. For a time he had to give way to Sir George Bonham, who returned to his post at Hongkong, and certainly 'avoided all irritating discussions' by doing nothing; but early in 1854 Bowring received his appointment as Her Majesty's Plenipotentiary and Chief Superintendent of British Trade in China. The Derby Ministry had run its brief course, and Lord Aberdeen had placed the Foreign Office in the hands of Lord Clarendon, who, with all his nervous hesitation and exaggerated deference to the Prime Minister, had a grip of a sound foreign policy. His first dispatch to Sir John Bowring (13th February 1854) contained this passage:—

'There are, unquestionably, points which it would be desirable to secure, and to which we have even a right by Treaty; and among those I would mention free and unrestricted intercourse with the Chinese authorities, and *free admission into some of the cities of China, especially Canton.*'

The whole dispatch is cautious and guarded, but the passage here italicized could only mean one thing, and Bowring did not fail to seize the hint and bring the

* *Parl. Papers*, 1857 [C. 2173], Correspondence relative to Entrance into Canton, p. 10.

City Question once more before the Chinese authorities. In April he addressed a communication to Commissioner Yeh in which he recited the various steps taken by Sir John Davis and Sir George Bonham in relation to the City Question—steps which it must be confessed were as often retrograde as progressive—how Davis had consented to a delay in opening Canton, and Kiying in 1847 had finally promised to open the city in two years; how Seu had repudiated this engagement in 1849, and how nothing more had been heard of the Question since then; and concluded with an invitation to the Commissioner to arrange an amicable meeting ‘within the walls of Canton and at your official residence.’ The correspondence that ensued led to nothing, and even when shortly afterwards Yeh actually humbled himself so far as to beg the support of the English forces against the Tai Ping rebels, who were menacing Canton, and Bowring went up the river with a naval force with supererogatory goodwill, no meeting took place, and the city remained hermetically sealed against foreigners. A further effort in 1855, on the occasion of Alcock’s appointment as Consul at Canton, was equally fruitless. The ingenious persuasions of the Plenipotentiary had no more effect than his menaces upon the ‘proud repulsiveness’ of Commissioner Yeh. He was not to be enticed or threatened into a sacrifice of his position. He knew that he had the Emperor and the Peking anti-‘barbarians’ at his back, and so long as he was High Commissioner at Canton not a ‘foreign devil’ should enter its gates.

Such was the position of the City Question when Parkes arrived at Canton to take charge of the Consulate, during Alcock’s absence, in June 1856. The

right of entrance had been deferred in 1849, and again postponed in 1854, out of respect, as Bowring professed, for the internal difficulties of the Chinese Government. The more obvious reason was that Lord Clarendon's instructions did not countenance downright hostilities. It had been raised again in 1855, and once more deferred—this time avowedly for lack of adequate naval support. But the Question was always there, it had never been renounced, and only awaited a fitting opportunity to be brought forward with renewed persistency.

The arrival of Parkes upon the scene, at the very spot which was the focus of the 'proud repulsiveness' of China, brought a new factor to bear upon the Question. Not only did Bowring now possess a lieutenant at Canton upon whose courage and determination and thorough comprehension of the Chinese character, he could absolutely rely, but this lieutenant came out girt with the armour of the gods—of Downing Street. Lord Palmerston had played the part of Hephaistos to the consular Achilles: Parkes came out almost straight from his presence; the new Prime Minister had of old taught him his ideal of what a Foreign Policy should be; and the Consul never forgot the memorable dispatch which had been addressed to Sir John Davis some years before (January 9, 1847) on the occasion of an affront from the Chinese, which that Governor, lately curbed by the Aberdeen bit, had been disposed to ignore:—

'We shall lose [wrote Lord Palmerston] all the vantage-ground we have gained by our victories in China, if we take a low tone. We must take especial care not to descend from the relative position which we have acquired. If we maintain that position

morally, by the tone of our intercourse, we shall not be obliged to recover it by forcible acts; but if we permit the Chinese, either at Canton or elsewhere, to resume, as they will no doubt be always endeavouring to do, their former tone of superiority, we shall very soon be compelled to come to blows with them again.

'Of course we ought, and by we I mean all the English in China, to abstain from giving the Chinese any ground of complaint, and much more from anything like provocation or affront; but we must stop on the very threshold any attempt on their part to treat us otherwise than as their equals, and we must make them all clearly understand, though in the civilest terms, that our Treaty rights must be respected. The Chinese must learn and be convinced that if they attack our people and our factories, they will be shot; and that if they ill-treat innocent Englishmen, who are quietly exercising their Treaty right of walking about the streets of Canton, they will be punished. . . . Depend upon it, that the best way of keeping any men quiet is to let them see that you are able and determined to repel force by force; and the Chinese are not in the least different, in this respect, from the rest of mankind.'

That dispatch should be put in the forefront of the instructions given to every Consul and every Minister in the East. Its tone is not that of bombast or of chauvinism: it is simply the only tone to take with Asiatics. So long as that self-respecting attitude is maintained and the rights of equality insisted on, there will be no difficulties with the Chinese. The moment a 'low tone' is adopted, and the 'susceptibilities' and arrogance of the Chinese officials are deferred to, the door is opened for insult. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, a man after Palmerston's own heart, had discovered this truth at Constantinople; Harry Parkes, another

apostle of the Palmerstonian doctrine, recognised its virtue in China; and these two men did the work of fifty diplomatists in the East. There has never been an ambassador at Constantinople who exerted a tithe of the influence that Lord Stratford wielded in Turkey; and no other Consul or Minister in China has ever possessed such power as Harry Parkes. He won his ascendancy mainly by never giving in, never allowing himself to be slighted, but always resolutely maintaining the dignity and honour of his country before the eyes of the Chinese. They knew that when he said a thing he meant it, and they had a deep conviction that what '*Pa Hia-li*' meant was exceedingly likely to be carried into effect.

There can be no manner of doubt that in 1856 the English, from Downing Street to Hongkong and Canton, were determined to avail themselves of the first fitting opportunity for pressing the City Question. It was understood that if the Chinese gave us a chance we should close with it. There was no hurry, and least of all was there the smallest intention of forcing a quarrel. The act of hostility must come from the Chinese, and it was sure to come before long. Then the opportunity would not be let slip.

At the beginning of July a hand-bill was circulated in the city with the object of inflaming the populace against foreigners. It recalled 'the fact that in the province of Canton, from the earliest to the present times, barbarians have never been allowed to go into the villages. Recently, however, a set of unprincipled vagabonds have been met with, who, without any fear of shame or exposure, carry on a secret intercourse with the barbarian dogs, and combine with them in a

number of ways for working out their crafty schemes.' And it wound up with a round incitement to murder:—

'Hereafter, therefore, whenever any barbarian dogs come within our limits, we ought by calling together our families, to maintain the dignity of our city (or province), and, bravely rushing upon them, kill every one. Thus may we, in the first place, appease the anger of heaven, in the second give evidence of our loyalty and patriotism, and in the third restore peace and quiet to our homes. How great would be the happiness we should thus secure!'

So truculent a document could not be passed over in silence, and, as it was impossible to see Yeh personally, Parkes addressed him in a written remonstrance. No steps were taken by the authorities to suppress the bill, and on 2nd July the ill-will of the inhabitants was displayed in an unprovoked attack upon two Englishmen, who were stoned as they were riding near the West Gate. In reporting the affair to Commissioner Yeh, the Consul said it had arisen from the ill-feeling stirred up by the placard already referred to, and he regretted that 'the authorities should have apparently lent their sanction to so wrong and dangerous a proceeding by permitting the sale of the placard in the public streets.' 'If those acts of violence,' he asked, 'are to continue, and foreigners should defend themselves, as they cannot be expected to avoid doing when thus assailed, where are these evils to end? Will the Chinese Government, bound both by Treaties and by their obligations as the constituted authorities of the country, protect them, or are foreigners themselves to devise means for their safety?'

A month and a half after the closing of this correspondence the incident of the lorcha *Arrow* occurred.

The details are fully narrated in the Blue-Book,* but the following letter from Parkes (dated 14th November) gives a clear and succinct account of the whole transaction :—

'The outrage on the *Arrow* lorchha will, I presume, have been reported by the last mail. Lorchha is the name given to a class of vessels of partly English and partly Chinese rig, that is greatly in request in these waters on account of the facility with which these craft are worked by native crews. They, like other vessels, receive colonial registers, and are *bond fide* British vessels as much as the brigs, schooners, steamers, etc. that are built or fit out from Hongkong. The *Arrow* was one of them, and had a regular register which was in my hands at the time that her crew was seized by the Chinese officers [October 8]. The seizure took place in open day in a crowded anchorage, and was conducted with unusual display and circumstance. Four mandarins and nearly forty men boarded the lorchha, hauled down her flag, and bound and carried off her crew to a war junk lying close by. The master was away at the moment they boarded in a vessel lying within hail of his own, but seeing what was going on he returned as speedily as possible, and endeavoured to stay the proceedings of the mandarins, but in vain. He then reported the circumstances to me; and I, in the hope of explaining away an offence which I at first imagined must have been committed by the mandarins in ignorance of the Treaty, which required them to make previous reference to me before seizing the men, went to the war junk, pointed out to the mandarins the course they should have pursued, and begged them to remedy the mistake by bringing the men in their own custody to the Consulate, where the case should be investigated and any guilty parties

* *Parl. Papers*, 1857 [110], Papers relating to the Proceedings of Her Majesty's Naval Forces at Canton.

among them be at once given up. They refused to do so, laughed at me and the Treaty, which they said they knew nothing about, and that they had the orders of their superiors and of the Imperial Commissioner for what they had done; and on my telling them that I must claim the men until my jurisdiction over them was acknowledged, they threatened me with violence, and I was actually struck one blow, though to this circumstance I have never made official allusion, as I wished to keep every personal feature out of view, and not to make the case out to be worse than it was.

'Returning to the Consulate I addressed [October 8] the Imperial Commissioner a temperate letter, begging him to restore the men to their vessel in a public manner, when I should at once be prepared to investigate, in conjunction with suitable Chinese officers, whom I requested him to depute for the purpose, any charge he might have to prefer against them. Instead of doing so he examined the men himself, decided that three were guilty and offered to return nine, whom I declined [October 10] to receive, and was then directed [October 12] by Sir John Bowring to require, in addition to my first demand that they should be publicly restored to their vessel, an apology for what had taken place, and an assurance that it should not occur again. The Commissioner, however, with the ninth article of the Supplementary Treaty before him, refused [October 14] all satisfaction, on the ground, as he alleged, that the lorcha was not an English vessel, and that her crew, being Chinese, were amenable only to his jurisdiction; and having once made this statement he ceased to take any notice of the applications addressed him by Sir John Bowring and myself, and would depute no officer to discuss the matter with me. Sir John Bowring then authorized the seizure of a war junk by way of reprisal. This order was carried out; but produced only a bad effect, for the Commissioner would not admit the public character of the junk seized, and in

common with all the Chinese who had knowledge of the affair ridiculed the idea of coercion on so trifling a scale.

‘The instructions I received from Sir John being ambiguous, I went [October 20] to Hongkong, and advocated more active measures, for it appeared to me that a very important principle was involved, and that the insolence of the Commissioner had been carried too far. The Admiral and Sir John decided that reparation should be forcibly exacted, and there appeared no means of doing it except by attacking some of the river forts. An ultimatum was sent in [October 21] to the Commissioner and twenty-four hours given him to make the apology and return the men, etc., failing which he was told that force would be resorted to. He then offered to return me ten men ; them I refused ; he then sent all the twelve, but not to their vessel in the way that had been required, by the officers who seized them, but in an underhand manner to the Consulate, demanding at the same time that two should be returned at once, and without deputing any officer to conduct with me their examination, and without offering a word of apology or disapproval of what had occurred. I replied [October 22] that my orders being to require certain satisfaction, which had been clearly stated, it was not competent for me to receive a small portion of it only, and I again declined to receive the men without an apology. That never came, and the matter then passed into the hands of the Admiral.’

Such was the famous *Arrow* case—the match which exploded the long train of British grievances at Canton. The Consul claimed that the lorchha was a British vessel, whilst Yeh contended that she was Chinese ; and of course the whole rights of the question turned upon this. There is not a shadow of doubt that she was, and that the Chinese knew she was, a British vessel, in the sense that hundreds of similar craft were British :

namely that she belonged to owners living in the British colony of Hongkong, and that she was registered in that port. Whether her owner were a Chinaman or an Englishman had nothing to do with her nationality: she had been granted a British register, carried a British master, and was entitled to fly the British flag. It was discovered after the seizure that her register, which had to be annually renewed, had expired a few days before: but that again was beside the question. For, first, she was on the point of returning to Hongkong to renew it; and if a vessel happen to be at sea or in some other port at the moment that her annual register expires, it would surely be monstrous to deprive her of the protection of her flag, say, in mid-ocean, on a mere quibble of dates. Secondly, any irregularity of the sort was a question for the authorities of the nation under whose flag she was sailing; it was their business to look into her right to carry it, and no other nation in the world was entitled to do more than bring the matter to the notice of the Consul of that flag. And thirdly, when the Chinese seized her crew for pirates, they were not aware of the irregularity of her register. This last fact was mentioned by Sir John Bowring in his despatch, and his use of the argument was afterwards treated by some speakers in the House of Commons as a mean and miserable subterfuge. Nevertheless it was at the root of the whole question. The gravamen of an insult lies in the intention. The Chinese did not know that the register had expired; they believed they were hauling down the flag and seizing the crew of a vessel entitled to British protection; and this constituted the insult. If a man deliberately sets about

stealing another man's watch, and after stealing it discovers that it did not lawfully belong to the other man, he is not the less a thief. The law was clear enough, and when Lord Clarendon laid the case before the law officers of the Crown he found Sir John Bowring's view of the case confirmed in every detail. As he remarked in his despatch of December 10:—

‘This act of the Chinese authorities constitutes an infraction of Article IX of the Supplementary Treaty. . . . The principle involved in this case is most important, and the demands made by Mr Consul Parkes appear to me to be very moderate under the circumstances. I consider that the redelivery of the three men still detained, and a subsequent formal demand for their extradition before they are given up again, should be insisted on as a *sine quâ non*. They must be considered as having been forcibly taken in breach of Treaty, and without any justification or excuse, from on board a British vessel, and illegally detained in custody by the order of the Imperial Commissioner, with full knowledge of all the circumstances and in defiance of a formal demand by the British Consul.’

Taking the illegality of the act as proved, the next question is, Did Parkes and Bowring make too much of it? Did they give the Chinese no chance of putting themselves right? Did they exact an excessive reparation? These questions are important, because, in view of the known anxiety of the English authorities to revive the City Question, it is desirable to ascertain, if the facts warrant it, that they were not trying to make a mountain out of a molehill in order to have a grievance on which to raise the larger issue. It would not have been creditable to deliberately drive the Chinese to extremities by needlessly irritating demands. But no such unfairness was contemplated.

A study of the documents must convince any one that every possible loophole was left for the Commissioner to effect an honourable retreat from an untenable position.

In the first place Parkes gave the mandarins who effected the arrests an opportunity to right themselves: he explained to them what he believed to be their mistake, and invited them to bring their prisoners to the Consulate, where the charges against them would be legally investigated. They knew perfectly well that there would be no attempt to screen the criminals, yet they refused with contumely, and even struck the Consul. As they stated that they had acted under orders from their superiors, he then reported the case as 'an insult of a very grave character' to Yeh, but his letter was courteous and his demand moderate enough. When Yeh replied by affirming the criminality of two of the arrested crew, keeping another as a witness, and offering to return the other nine, with the contemptuous comment, 'She is not a foreign lorcha and it is useless therefore to enter into any discussion respecting her,' the Consul could only refuse to accept his answer. As he remarked, the Commissioner's reply 'is in effect a declaration on his part that he will respect neither British flag nor British register, whenever any Chinese states to him that a vessel so provided is not British owned.' Moreover three British subjects were still in illegal captivity, and they must be surrendered. The offer of restoring the nine men was therefore properly declined.

So far Parkes had acted solely on his own responsibility, and had acted with moderation. He had merely demanded his Treaty right to examine the accused British subjects at the Consulate, and his

demand had been refused. He had not even sought for an apology: that was an addition, and a very proper one, by Sir John Bowring, who rose to the occasion with the spirited instinct of a man who recognizes an emergency. The idea of an apology and a retaliation originated with the authorities at Hong-kong and not with Parkes: and had Yeh conformed to the Treaty and sent the men to the Consulate to be examined, he would not have been asked for an apology or witnessed a reprisal. He had brought the humiliation on his own head. He could not make up his mind to it, and he never apologized to the day of his death.

Failing an apology, the matter passed into the hands of Admiral Sir Michael Seymour,* and it is no part of this biography to relate or to criticize the proceedings of the fleet in the Canton river, over which Parkes had no control. It must, however, be evident to any student of the Blue-Book that the authorities, one and all, greatly underestimated the tenacity of purpose they were going to encounter. After every blow, after the capture of each fort, Sir John Bowring and the Admiral expected to receive Yeh's appeal for quarter. But no such appeal was ever made. Yeh argued every point with a tenacity worthy of a better cause: he never dreamed of surrendering a jot of his position. He stuck to his brief: the lorcha was Chinese, and he was perfectly right to board her; she flew no flag, so how could it have been hauled down? Facts did not

* It is worth noting that in his anxiety to come to a peaceable arrangement Parkes went beyond his duty in giving Yeh a *second* warning of the approaching expiration of the forty-eight hours' grace allowed by the Admiral for compliance with the British demands.

disturb him : he reiterated his own version, which was not fact. And when he found that the English were as obstinate as himself, and, not content with taking the forts round Canton, had on the 27th even begun to shell his own yamun, Yeh damned his cause by issuing a proclamation to the people to 'exterminate these troubrous English villains, killing them whenever you meet them, whether on shore or in their ships. For each of their lives that you may thus take you shall receive, as before, thirty dollars.' 'Votre Excellence,' protested the French Consul, 'sait bien que ce n'est pas ainsi que les nations civilisées se font la guerre, et que la raison et l'équité protestent hautement contre cet encouragement donné à la perfidie et à l'assassinat.'

After such a proclamation no compromise was possible. The immediate result was the breaching of the city wall by a steady fire from the ship's guns placed in the captured fort known as the Dutch Folly, opposite the city, and the Admiral's forcible entrance on 29th October into Canton, where he and Parkes together visited the yamun of the invincible Commissioner. They had at last entered the stronghold of Chinese arrogance ; but Yeh had flown.

The Admiral had not made his forcible entry into Canton without warning. He had previously made a formal demand for admission. On October 27th he instructed Parkes to 'demand for all foreign representatives the same free access to the authorities and city of Canton (where all the Chinese high officials reside) as is enjoyed under Treaty at the other four ports and denied to us at Canton alone.' In other words, the affair of the lorcha *Arrow* was relegated to its original

insignificance, and the eternal City Question was again to the fore.

The first simple demand had again been enlarged. Parkes had asked merely for the restitution of the captured crew. Bowring had stipulated for an apology. And now the Admiral had reopened the City Question, not indeed in its full force, but only so far as the entrance of foreign representatives was concerned. There was nothing surprising or unusual in the gradual enlargement of our conditions of peace. A quarrel that might be arranged with a bare apology at the beginning cannot be so economically settled after blows have been exchanged and injuries inflicted. As we have seen, the City Question had always been present to the minds of the English officials, and it was well known that the subject would be pressed when an opportunity occurred. What better opportunity could be sought than the destruction of life and property, which had been caused mainly by the want of a personal explanation between the representatives of the two countries? Sir John Bowring saw the opening even before matters had reached their more serious developments. As early as the 16th October he told Parkes to tell certain Canton gentry with whom he was then conferring 'that I am *determined* on obtaining redress, and that the step taken is only initiatory to others, if redress be refused or delayed. You may say that I deem the matter so grave that I might probably be willing to visit the Imperial Commissioner *at his yamen in the city*, or to receive him here. Cannot we use the opportunity and carry the City Question? If so, I will come up with the whole fleet. I think we have now a stepping-stone from which with good

management we may move on to important sequences.' He reverted to the question in several subsequent letters; indeed, every day brought a fresh stimulus from Hongkong.

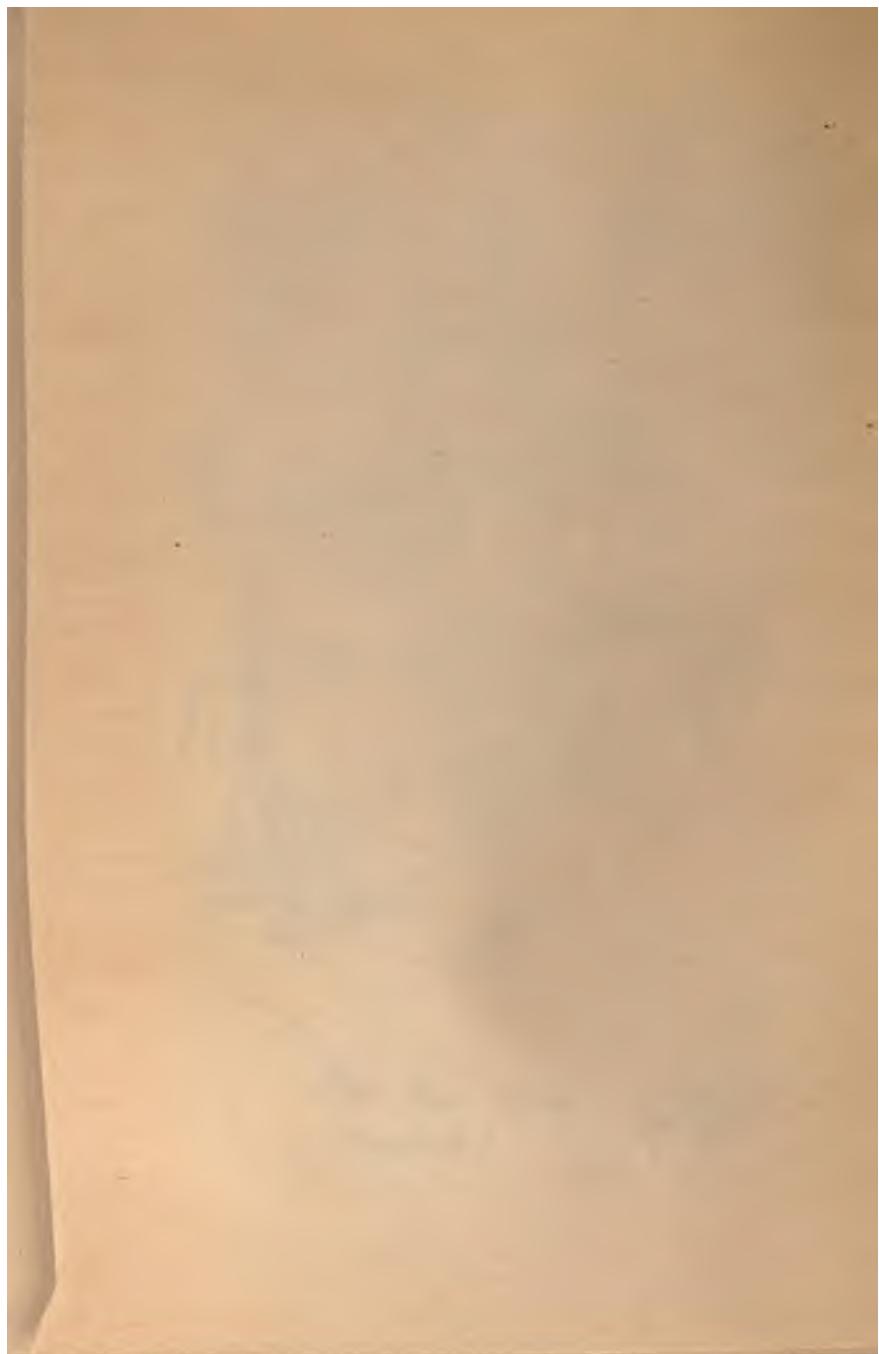
But although Parkes was not responsible for introducing an element into the discussion which, though absolutely right and opportune, undoubtedly embittered the contest, he agreed, heart and soul, with every one of the forward steps taken by Bowring and the Admiral; and though the Consul, in his subordinate position, could not officially take the lead in pressing on the negotiations, it may be shrewdly suspected that Sir John Bowring rested a good deal upon his advice. The Plenipotentiary was a man of a nervous, not to say fidgety nature, and it may be doubted whether he would have kept a steady course if he had not had the constant support and counsel of Consul Parkes and Chinese Secretary Wade. Letters passed daily between Bowring and Parkes, and Wade went three or four times to Canton to help his colleague and keep the principal actors in line. On the 20th October the Consul visited Hongkong to confer with his chief, and the vigour of the latter's instructions was considerably strengthened by the interview. When the City Question was raised, Parkes, though he did not originate the subject, was not a whit behind the Admiral and Plenipotentiary in advocating the necessity of pressing it. He saw the root of the present difficulty in the inaccessibility of the Chinese authorities, and that, he considered, constituted an ample reason for breaking down the barrier:—

'It may indeed with truth be said (he wrote to Sir John Bowring, October 25) that want of personal access to the Government of Canton, which is denied

conditions of positive danger. He had been injured by an explosion in the taking of the French Folly fort, and the Admiral had expressed himself very handsomely on the value of his 'all-important' services exercised 'under circumstances of personal danger to himself.' Parkes was absolutely fearless, but it was hardly pleasant to know that you could not put your head outside the factories without the chance of becoming a mark for the Chinese matchlockmen on the wall outside. All the time the Admiral was shelling the Government buildings in Canton, Europeans were still living in the small enclosure of the foreign factories. Mrs Parkes, who was as plucky as her husband, could not be dissuaded from exposing herself on the housetop to see the shells flying over her head. They had both fortunately gone to Hongkong before the factories were burnt by the Chinese, on the night of December 14th, but they lost nearly everything they possessed. At that moment he was writing to his sister :—

'I am well and in the best of spirits. True, I am up to my neck in hot water, but I hope to use it in washing an immense amount of Canton filth that has been accumulating during years past. . . . We are just in this position that having taken everything but the city, we cannot *take* it (though we can *destroy* it, though we do not wish to be compelled to do that) unless we have a land force both for the attack and subsequent *occupation* which the former renders necessary. Better not to attack at all than to take and then retreat from it. I trust the Government will take the thing up spiritedly, and send us on some troops. We may not have to use them, but their *presence* will be necessary for a satisfactory adjustment of *all* difficulties; and I trust now that they will see the necessity of no longer making Canton and the Imperial Commis-





sioner Yeh the channels of communication, but establish themselves at Peking at once. . . . As yet it is no war with China, but simply at Canton, and that because the Commissioner chose to *declare it*.'

To her husband, Mr Lockhart, he spoke even more plainly:—‘I trust that you and I will see great changes in this great Empire before very long. The issue of these troubles ought to be a *resident Minister at Peking and liberty to go through the length and breadth of the land*, and I trust it will be so.’

Matters were now at a standstill. By the middle of November the Admiral had taken everything that could be taken with the force at his command; he had taken all the forts and war-junks, but he was not strong enough to occupy Canton; and nothing more could be done to bring Yeh to submission. Indeed Sir John Bowring, who had begun to grow vacillating, continued to hold out the olive branch to the indignant Commissioner and to propose amicable interviews—after all that had happened. He was clearly frightened at his own temerity, and did much to annul the good effects of his originally bold and determined attitude. Nor were the Admiral’s movements, however necessary, calculated to bring down Yeh’s defiant mood. After the burning of the English factory in December, there was no further object, and there was considerable risk, in holding any position on shore; and Admiral Seymour accordingly withdrew his men from their intrenched position in the Factory garden, (shown in Captain Bate’s plan,) and confined his defence to a line across the river and the Macao fort opposite Honan. Here he resolved to wait until the arrival from England of the reinforcements he had at last asked for. He and Sir John Bowring had deferred making this request as

long as there seemed any prospect of success with the force already at command. In vain had Parkes and Wade pressed upon their superiors in urgent terms as early as 18th November the necessity of asking for military reinforcements in order to occupy Canton. Both Bowring and Seymour were afraid of a refusal from the Home Government, and hoped against hope that the Chinese would yield. Parkes and Wade were right, however; and in January the application for reinforcements could no longer be delayed.

A weary interval of waiting had to be endured before the reinforcements, if granted, could arrive; and meanwhile the situation was disagreeable if not dangerous. The Chinese naturally regarded the gradual retirement of the British fleet as a sign of defeat, and were emboldened to carry the war into the enemy's country. Beyond burning the European settlement at Whampoa in January they did not effect any considerable damage, but their junks and fire-ships, concealed in shallow creeks, were continually molesting the English vessels, which could not pursue them into their retreats. Many conflicts occurred which called forth the courage of the English sailors, and as Mr Boulger has said, 'a volume might be written on the feats of valour and endurance wrought during this period by the officers and men under Sir Michael Seymour's command.* At Hong-kong, the streets were placarded with promises of reward—now raised to 100 taels (£33)—for English heads; the Chinese population received stringent orders to quit the island; and the lives of Europeans were threatened by a dastardly attempt to poison the bread with arsenic.

Meanwhile the House of Commons had its say about

* *History of China*, iii. 415.

the contest that had been going on in China, and said it with that superb disregard of consequences abroad which often distinguishes our legislators when they try to meddle in foreign affairs of which they know nothing. Parkes's conduct was freely canvassed, and Mr Cobden was good enough, whilst disapproving his action, to speak condescendingly of his abilities; but Sir John Bowring, as the official chiefly responsible for the imbroglio, was fiercely attacked. The onslaught, both in the Lords and Commons, was obviously a party move, and carried no weight whatever with those who knew anything of the subject. Nor did it influence the constituencies. When the vote of censure was carried in the Commons, Palmerston appealed to the country, and was again returned to power with redoubled strength, whilst Cobden and Bright lost their seats. With characteristic courage the Premier had not waited for the verdict, but ordered out the troops and appointed the Earl of Elgin to conduct the negotiations that were to follow the war. Parkes had no cause to regret the debate: he had been splendidly defended, and the armament was his best vindication.

'It is the cause,' he wrote, 'of the West against the East, of Paganism against Christendom, and what may we not look to as the result? The opening of China indeed I trust. I confidently hope too that a satisfactory adjustment of all difficulties may be attained with a slight effusion of blood. Canton, it is true, must fall. I see no hope of any arrangement being arrived at without this primary step being effected; but I do trust that with the fall of that city—a punishment upon it long wanted—hostilities may end, and that the Emperor may then consent to receive a representative at Peking.'

CHAPTER X

RULING CANTON

1857-1859

EVERY one remembers how the China Expedition was met on its way out by an urgent appeal for help from Lord Canning, the Viceroy of India, then in the first grave alarms of the Mutiny; and how promptly Lord Elgin recognized the critical nature of the situation, and took upon himself the responsibility of diverting the force from Hongkong to Calcutta. How greatly this clear-sighted act contributed to the saving of the Indian Empire cannot be too highly appreciated, and nothing in Lord Elgin's distinguished career was more laudable than this sacrifice of the immediate success of his own mission to the paramount necessities of the Indian Government. The effect upon the position in China was naturally disappointing to those who were waiting at Hongkong to see Commissioner Yeh brought to reason; but it was felt that the delay was amply justified. They were not equally satisfied that the new Plenipotentiary understood the situation, nor did subsequent events altogether remove their doubts. Lord Elgin was disposed to treat the opinions of the residents and old officials somewhat cavalierly, and it cannot be said that he produced a very favourable impression upon those who were best

able to judge of the steps to be taken. He seemed to regard the whole affair—and especially its beginning, the *Arrow* incident—as a 'wretched' blunder, and his sympathies were apparently rather with the Chinese than with his fellow-countrymen. Nothing, in his opinion, was too violent or cruel for the authorities and residents at Hongkong to approve, and in the subsequent operations he was constantly taking credit for inducing the Admiral and General to employ the methods of common humanity towards their victims, the 'poor Chinese.' One would imagine that he had never seen the Blue-Book in which the careful precautions of Admiral Seymour to avoid slaughter are described, and that he had not read the reports of how Consul Parkes had gone in front, at the risk of his life, to beg the Chinese to retire before our men fired. His was doubtless a noble ideal, but it was hardly a practical policy for the situation, and Lord Elgin was scarcely the man for the work to be done.

That work did not begin till near the close of 1857—more than a year after Admiral Seymour had exhausted his resources of 'argument by artillery' in the Canton river. The delay had of course given the Chinese a totally false impression. They believed the English were afraid, and the belief encouraged them to be bold in molesting the white-livered 'barbarians.' The attacks on our shipping, and even on our men-of-war, became so annoying that the Admiral had to take vigorous measures; and in May, before Lord Elgin's arrival, the blue jackets under Commodore Keppel, Parkes's friend of 1842, had performed a series of dashing 'cutting-out' expeditions in the creeks, and had destroyed the large fleet of war-junks which the

sailors and soldiers had not come up the river merely for a picnic, as Commissioner Yeh, after consultation with his favourite idol, seemed to imagine. It was a dangerous task to go into the thickly-peopled suburbs and scatter 'barbarian' proclamations, and naturally it was Parkes who volunteered to do it. He and Captain Hall went to work with a will; landed a party here and there, distributed the placards to the crowd, and then were off again before the natives had got over their amazement. Risky as it was, there were ludicrous incidents in this bill-sticking business:—

'In one of these rapid descents Captain Hall caught a mandarin in his chair not far from the outer gate. The Captain pasted the mandarin up in his chair with the barbarian papers, pasted the chair all over with them, and started the bearers to carry this new advertizing van into the city. The Chinese crowd, always alive to a practical joke, roared. These belligerent bill-stickers have brought off some Chinese counter-proclamations. Arrogant to the last, these papers say that the rebellious English, having seduced the French to join in this rebellion, it becomes necessary to stop the trade altogether and utterly to annihilate these barbarians.'*

Yeh's final answer was as unyielding as ever. Not a jot did he recede from his old position. The question had now gone beyond diplomacy, and the Admirals took it up. On the 28th, the day of the 'Massacre of the Innocents,' as Lord Elgin sadly observed, the bombardment began at daybreak. The firing continued all day and all night. On the 29th the Magazine hill, which is the key of Canton, was seized after an

* G. WINGROVE COOKE, *Times Special Correspondence from China*, p. 310, 311 (1859).

hour and a half's fighting, and at 2 P.M. Gough's fort was captured. The city was now completely commanded by the English and French guns. It was very nearly a bloodless victory, for the resistance had been insignificant, and the fire of the ships had been concentrated on certain spots, notably on Yeh's yamun, which had been reduced to ruins. Then followed a curious pause. For a week the conquerors stood looking down from the walls, where they were now huddled, upon the 'plain of chimneyless roofs' of Canton, which lay beneath at their mercy:—

'People still ask, not what *we* are going to do next, but what the Chinese are going to do. These curious, stolid, imperturbable people seem determined simply to ignore our presence here, and to wait till we are pleased to go away. Yeh lives much as usual. He cut off four hundred Chinese heads the other morning, and stuck them up in the south of the city. Our leaders seem to be puzzled by the tenacious, childlike, helpless obstinacy—the passive resistance—of their enemy. When petitioners come up to complain of some plundering straggler, there is a buzz of expectation in the camp. Mr Parkes and Mr Wade, the interpreters, who, by reason of the general ignorance of the language, are become masters of the position, are looked to with ludicrous anxiety. There is an evident hope that the gentleman with the tail is a mandarin with an offer of submission.*

But no submission was thought of; and, since the Chinese authorities declined to come up to us, we had to go down to them. Parkes, as usual, ventured first into the city, and reported the people civil. On 5th January the troops entered the streets of Canton, and traversing the 'Avenue of Benevolence and Love,'

* *Ibid.*, p. 355.

in a few hours captured the city Governor and the Tartar General, besides an immense store of treasure, which the inhabitants very willingly carried down to the ships for a small consideration. One more capture had still to be made—the capture of Yeh, and it was made by his special adversary. There were rumours that the great mandarin had escaped, or committed suicide, but Parkes had a strong impression that he was still in the Tartar quarter of the city, and he determined to find him. He had missed the exploring party which had captured the Governor and General, and feared he was 'out of the running.' Wondering what to do, he came across Commodore Elliot and Captain Key (afterwards Sir Astley Cooper Key) of the *Sanspareil*. These officers knew that if any man could 'nose out' Yeh it was Consul Parkes, and they lost no time in putting themselves and a hundred blue jackets under his guidance. They found a Chinese student who, after a close interrogatory, admitted that he thought he knew the Commissioner's retreat. They took him to the Governor's yamen, and there, 'after some admonition,' the clue was confirmed by Pih-kwei himself:—

'He was made to send a second guide, and the two Chinamen were placed in front of the blue jackets. These unwilling guides, as they were urged along the narrow streets of the Tartar city, did not cease shouting to the crowds which ran together, "Good people, go about your affairs. These gentlemen have just had a respectful interview with Pih-kwei, and they are now going to have another interview with Yeh." "Very well," said the crowd, habitually deferential to the cap of the small mandarin. As they got deeper and deeper into the maze of streets, some of

the officers seemed to think they were doing an imprudent thing. "If the worst come to the worst," said Captain Key, "we know the direction of the walls by this compass, and can fight our way to them"; so on they went. The longest chase must have an end. At last the guides called a halt at the door of a third-rate yamun, which appeared closed and deserted. The doors were forced open, and the blue jackets were all over the place in a moment. It was evident that they were now on the right scent. The house was full of hastily packed baggage. Mandarins were running about—yes, *running* about; and at last one came forward and delivered himself up as Yeh. It was a fine act of devotion, but it did not impose upon Parkes, who had a portrait of the great unseen. The man was not fat enough, and was at once pushed aside, and hurrying on they at last spied a very fat man contemplating the achievement of getting over the wall at the extreme rear of the yamun. Captain Key and Commodore Elliot's coxwain rushed forward. Key took the fat gentleman round the waist [or neck], and the coxwain twisted the august tail of the Imperial Commissioner round his fist. There was no mistake now; — this was the veritable Yeh. Instinctively the blue jackets felt that it must be Yeh, and they tossed up their hats and gave three rattling cheers.*

When Parkes informed the great Yeh that he must accompany the guard to headquarters, the Commissioner said in his arrogant style, 'Who are you that address me in my own language?' 'There is no need to tell you my name,' answered the Consul, 'you know it as well as I know yours.' It was an

* COOKE, *L.C.* p. 341, 342. Almost the first things found among the records were the *original ratified* Treaties of England, France, and America, which every one supposed to be deposited under the Imperial eye at Peking.

added bitterness to be the captive of the famous Consul Parkes, whom he had hated and reviled ever since the beginning of the contest. The long duel was over, and it had ended in a dramatic scene. We shall hear no more of Commissioner Yeh. He recovered all his old insolence as soon as he was assured that his life was safe. He was treated with the studious deference which English men of honour make a point of showing towards a helpless enemy: but it was thrown away upon him. He went to Calcutta on board the *Inflexible*, and after two years' captivity he died.

Parkes's conduct during the attack on Canton, where he had been repeatedly under fire, and had risked his life in all sorts of hazardous services, was warmly eulogized in despatches by Admiral Seymour and Commodore Elliot, and met with Lord Malmesbury's 'entire approval.' The Admiral generously admitted that he would not have known what to do without the Consul's knowledge of the people and language and his ever ready counsel and help. On all sides he was regarded as 'the man of the situation.'

The Chinese Government of Canton had been abolished. Its officials were captives, and its chief was exiled to India. The question arose, what was to be put in its place? Martial law under the Commanders-in-Chief of the allied Forces was of course established, but how could these gallant officers maintain order, investigate charges of violence and robbery, administer civil law, and generally govern a city of a million inhabitants who spoke a language which was incomprehensible to their conquerors? Three men in all the allied camp could speak Chinese: Parkes, Wade, and the French interpreter.

Without the help of one of those three nothing whatever could be done. Bayonets were useful enough as an ultimate argument, but there were endless details of administration to be attended to where a tongue and not cold steel was wanted.

The allied Commanders were at a nonplus. It was clear that some sort of native executive would have to be set up; but the difficulty was to arrange satisfactory safeguards. After many consultations a plan was devised which later experience proved to be workable if not quite satisfactory. The captive Governor Pih-kwei was reinstated in office, after a solemn lecture from Lord Elgin, on 9th January; and a Commission of Europeans was appointed, nominally to assist him in dealing with cases of dispute between Chinese and foreigners—really to keep a strict watch upon him and govern the city themselves. The Commission consisted of three members—Colonel Holloway, Captain Martineau des Chenez, and Consul Parkes, and they entered upon their duties on 10th January. They were at first quartered, along with a guard of marines and artillery, in the Governor's yamun, side by side with Pih-kwei, and immediately set about the work of restoring order and public confidence.

Parkes was now entering upon a wholly novel phase of his career. He was practically Governor of Canton. It is doing no injustice to his colleagues, or to his superiors the Commanders-in-Chief, to claim for him the most important part of the work that was to come, for they all willingly admitted that without him that work would have been impossible. General Straubenzee wrote to Lord Elgin just a year after the Commission

was established in these terms: 'I must now in justice state to your Lordship the valuable assistance afforded me by Mr Parkes, for without his knowledge of the language and customs of the country I could have done nothing, and could not have gained any true information. *His energy is untiring, never sparing himself in any way; personal danger and personal comfort were never thought of when he could in any way advance the public service.*' Such praise from the General in command of the British forces at Canton speaks volumes: soldiers say what they mean, and say it without a flourish of fine phrases.

Parkes deserved every word of it, for never had a harder task been committed to the energy of one man, and that man still under the age of thirty. His successive colleagues helped or impeded him, according to their tastes and characters. They came and went as duty or promotion called them, and others took their places. Some worked hard, others tried to throw obstacles in his way. But whilst others were shifted, Parkes remained unflinchingly at his work, and he was the one indispensable member, for he alone could speak with the natives and understood their ways. Writing approvingly of H. N. Lay's ('one of our best interpreters') accompanying Lord Elgin to the North, he explains his not being chosen himself for the post, to which he was obviously entitled, by the necessity of his presence at Canton: 'I was required to stay here in order to form the Commission, which could not have been instituted had I not remained. It is a peculiar arrangement, and one that must be wholly unintelligible to people at a distance. With a high title, we are wholly without powers or

defined functions, and I have been simply a drudge or man-of-all-work to the force left here.' What manner of difficulties he had to deal with may be seen in his reports to Lord Elgin: one thing, however, is not mentioned in these official documents, which throws a strong light on his fearless character. He was the mark for secret assassination; there was a reward of thirty thousand dollars on his head, and frequent attempts were made upon his life. But no one could have guessed from his manner that his daily patrols through the hostile city were not as safe as a saunter in Pall Mall.

The first thing, of course, was to establish friendly relations with the people and induce them to resume their business and occupations. This proved far less difficult than might have been expected. The Chinese people are generally more sensible than their rulers; at all events they set personal advantage very much above political sentiment, and it was soon found that the shrewd and practical Chinaman had no intention of sacrificing himself for the sake of an idea. The people flocked back to their shops and houses—where these had not been blown up—and trade revived rapidly when the port was again thrown open to commerce after seventeen months' closure. Eight million pounds of tea were sold in a month, cottons were imported, and ships were lading for England. 'Supplies,' Parkes reported, 'of every kind are abundant and cheap.' Patrols of English, French, and Chinese police kept order among the soldiers and protected the citizens, and a proclamation of amnesty and another 'enjoining the people to assign to foreigners the same social position as themselves, and strictly interdicting the

issue of hostile or disrespectful placards and the use of opprobrious language,' were drawn up and circulated by Parkes with the best results. Foreigners walked about the streets without the least molestation, and Alcock, who returned to his consulate at Canton—or rather on a hulk at Honan, 'the Birkenhead of this Liverpool'—remarked that 'a corporal with a switch kept order in the few crowded streets still left, without the slightest sign of resistance or animosity, where no foreigner could before pass the gates, or even walk in the suburbs or outskirts without suffering insult and contumely from the very children.'

Of course Canton could not be made as safe and orderly as the city of London in a month. There were still robberies and assaults to be dealt with. Pih-kwei gallantly offered to add a Chinese force to the night patrols of the allied police; but the Commissioners ungratefully suspected a deeper motive than disinterested helpfulness, and declined the offer. He had made one or two attempts to assert himself before, and had been summarily but politely brought to his bearings. In the present case Parkes preferred to do the work himself. The fact that his life was threatened seems to have added to the delight he took in pervading all parts of the city by day and night. On one occasion, Alcock went to the Commissioners' yamen intending to accompany him on one of his early patrols through the streets, but found that he had not come in. On inquiry it was discovered that a masked battery had been constructed among some ruined houses on his route and had been fired as he approached: the men around him had been wounded or killed, but Parkes himself came back unscathed.

It was only one of many attempts that were made to assassinate the man whom the Chinese regarded as the cause of their disasters. A prisoner afterwards confessed that he had been sounded on the subject: 'His account is very interesting,' wrote the intended victim, just as if it concerned some one at the antipodes: 'the mandarins who had him were particular in trying to ascertain by what means *I* could be shot, and whether he would undertake to do it. And as they appeared to inquire only after me, and never made the faintest allusion to the General or naval officers, French or English, it is quite in the natural course of the present current of feeling that they will be a little jealous at not having had plots laid for their lives.'

So far there were signs of improvement. But Parkes did not like the general look of things. The officials and better classes still kept away, and there were indications that the Chinese had not realized the capture of Canton in its full significance. It was doubtful whether the Peking Government had at all grasped the meaning of our policy. In a letter to Hammond he says:—

'The Canton people appear completely perplexed; not less with the policy of their own Government than that of the Allies. That a city should be captured and then at once given back into the hands of its former Government is a circumstance wholly without precedent in their annals, and they scarcely know how to regard the fact. I doubt whether they consider it as a mark of strength on our part. It suits the Chinese Government well in one respect, as at a distance they are enabled to ignore the fact of our being in occupation; and in a report to the Emperor from Pih-kwei, which, wholly by accident, I obtained a glance of the other day, I observe that, in alluding to us, he speaks

the Admiral's conduct in forbidding any movement of the gunboats during his absence in the North was severely criticized. Lay wrote indignantly of our pusillanimity in allowing ourselves to be 'bullied by a set of long-tailed beggars,' and exclaimed, 'Oh for a Keppel, just for one month!' Others declared that our army was eternally disgraced, and General Straubenzee was dowered with a number of uncomplimentary and probably undeserved epithets from various quarters which need not now be disinterred from oblivion.

As the year drew towards its close the prospect became rather brighter in the eyes of the keenest observer in China. His work at Canton progressed admirably, and Lord Elgin expressed himself almost warmly about it: he 'never speaks of your head and administrative powers save in terms of emphatic admission of their worth,' wrote Wade. Parkes was not reconciled to the policy of Lord Elgin, but he could not deny that the cards had played beautifully for that amiable ambassador. The Treaty with Japan was a new and unexpected feather in the Bruce's cap, and Parkes began to cherish hopes of consular employment in the delightful climate of Yokohama instead of in the stifling 'ditch' of Canton. 'I have a longing for Japan,' he wrote in November. He felt that after the prominent part he had played in recent events Canton was not the place for him: 'I must get away from this part of China,' he wrote, and yet he was not disposed to fall back upon the Consulate at Amoy, of which he was still the nominal chief. After all he had done, an insignificant post like Amoy would have been a retrogression. He wanted 'pioneering work at new places,' and he thought he should find it in Japan. He

was feeling tired and ill, and the ceaseless office work seemed almost more than he could bear:—

‘I often catch myself thinking that I have had enough of this climate and of H.M.’s service too, and have a wish to earn my bread in a little more independent way—free at least of Chinese, language and people, of both of which I am heartily sick—and in an atmosphere of healthy coolness; and having in consequence of the Wilsons’ visit had New Zealand often in my mind of late, I am beginning to think that sheep-farming would suit my circumstances, and that time might be better employed in handling a spade or plough than in for ever subscribing on foolscap that eternal nonsense of “having the honour to be” some fool’s “most obedient humble servant,” and such like rotten phraseology of the day. However, these are thoughts of July, with the weather at a high temperature, and they might descend with the quicksilver in a few months’ time. However, the sense of fatigue and of being *ennuyé* altogether with one’s public work is unmistakable.’

In one important respect he was much better off than for some months past. In November he had his wife and the little daughter, born in the midst of war’s alarms, once more with him, to his great delight, and the two large rooms which belonged to him in the Commissioner’s yamun (once the Tartar General’s) had been partitioned into various cheerful sub-divisions by screens six or eight feet high, which allowed privacy but did not hinder the pervasion of infantile merriment and the domestic sounds that he had long and sadly missed. It was pleasant, too, to have his old chief back at his side again, though their positions were altered, and it might have been a little trying to a less staunch friend than Alcock to see his quondam interpreter lording it over the big city to which the

former had been denied access in former years. Sir Rutherford's recollections of that time were full of admiration for his junior's able conduct in an embarrassing situation.

Altogether 1859 opened more cheerily, and to Parkes's great satisfaction the very beginning of the new year was signalized by resolute measures against the 'braves.' It was high time. Although order had been established in Canton with marvellous success during the first year of the Commission, the country outside was still very far from settled. The celebrated Ninety-six Villages were as turbulent as ever; the Fayuen and other bodies of disaffected 'Commissioners,' who had put a reward of thirty thousand dollars on Parkes's head, were perpetually plotting against the 'barbarians'; and the province was distracted as much by the license and extortions of its so-called 'braves' as by the serious incursions of the Tai Ping rebels, who remained in possession of a large part of China and were destined to give still more trouble in the future. A more than usually impudent attack led to a punitive expedition in January, and the success of this move induced the allied Commanders to abandon their former policy of keeping to the camp at Canton, and to make various military progresses through the country.

'Ever foremost when work was to be done, or risk met,' Parkes accompanied the first Expedition, and on his return was 'very warmly thanked' by the General for his 'invaluable services.' His zeal and energy were no less remarkable than his perfect coolness and fearlessness in danger.* He was delighted with the success

* He 'knows not what fear is,' wrote Lord Elgin in 1860; and Admiral Sir Michael Seymour, when he retired from the China command in 1859,

of the little excursion to Shektsing, and encouraged the General in his plan of exploring the country further, and thus bringing our presence and strength more prominently before the people, and diminishing their dread of possible ravages from the 'braves.' Expeditions northwards to Fayuen, and up the West River, were discussed, reported to Lord Elgin, and strongly approved by him. The ambassador, who had previously written contemptuously about 'a parcel of ridiculous stories about arming of braves,' had at last realized the serious state of the country round Canton, and not only remonstrated with the Imperial Commissioners who were negotiating the new tariff with him at Shanghai, but came south himself to give his support.

Short excursions had already been made by the allied Commanders to Fatshan, and by Parkes on 18th January to Kong-tsun. On this last, escorted only by Captain Pym and fourteen men, he distributed proclamations in several villages, tore down hostile placards, conversed with the principal inhabitants and officials, and was throughout treated with civility. But after Lord Elgin's arrival a more considerable expedition to Fayuen, some thirty miles from Canton, was made in February—the longest march inland yet made by English troops in China;—and the West River Expedition, which immediately followed that to Fayuen, was the most important step yet taken towards opening up the country. To quote a passage from Parkes's Report:—

'During an absence of sixteen days, the West River sent Parkes a very flattering letter of thanks for his services in the two attacks on Canton, in the course of which he said: 'In addition to the regular duties of your profession, I have also to mention your gallant conduct under fire on many occasions.'

had been ascended to a point nearly 200 miles from its mouth, ninety-five miles of which, viz., from the Sam-shway junction to Woochow, had never before been explored by a foreign vessel, nor had any of the places throughout the distance last named been openly visited on any former occasion by Europeans. The six cities of Shuntuk, Sam-shway, Shao-king, Tih-king, Fung-chuen, and Woochow, and the three important towns of Shawan, Yung-ki, and Sainam, had been entered and traversed, and the Expedition had passed in sight of numerous other large towns. The marked courtesy and respect which, whether required or offered voluntarily, characterized at all these points the reception given by the local authorities to the allied Commanders could not have escaped the notice of the people, who, it is to be hoped, will learn from this altered tone of their authorities that foreign relations of a new character have been entered on in this province, and that the ill-treatment of foreigners has now ceased to be regarded as a means of gaining public honours and reputation.'

It is a singular comment on the extreme deliberation that characterizes the progress of each step in the opening up of China that a whole generation had passed since this Expedition proceeded up the West River, when on 26th October 1893 the following paragraph appeared in the *Times* :—

'The Hongkong Chamber of Commerce has addressed a letter to Lord Rosebery asking him to open negotiations with the Chinese Government for the opening to navigation, by the steamers of all nations, of the West River, which, after rising in Yun Nan, flows through the provinces of Kwang Si and Kwang Tung and enters the sea below Canton. The Hongkong Chamber also asks for the opening of the cities of Woochow, Tsunchow, and Nan-ning, on the West River, to foreign trade. In the course of the letter to the Secretary of State the

chairman of the Chamber says that foreign trade at the existing treaty ports in Southern China has now reached its utmost limit, and cannot possibly be extended until new fields are opened by improved means of communication with the interior. The foreign trade of Southern China is really confined to a very few ports, consisting of Foochow, Amoy, Swatow, Macao, Canton and Pakhoi, and from these the interior marts of the provinces of Fuh Kien and Kwang Tung are scarcely reached. The great inland provinces of Kwang Si, Yun Nan, and Kwei Chow are, from a commercial point of view, not touched at all. The advantages that would accrue to foreign commerce generally, as well as to Hongkong, by the opening to steam navigation of the West River and its tributaries would certainly, the chairman says, be very great. Hongkong, situated as it is at the mouth of the Canton river, would not only be a larger distributing centre than it is now, but it would benefit greatly by the increased passenger traffic which would necessarily follow upon increased facilities of transport. The opening of the West River would also be of great advantage to the Chinese population in the neighbourhood. It would secure to the Chinese Government increased revenue through the custom-houses in the several districts through which the river passes, it would give an impulse to inland production by bringing produce within reach of a market, and it would augment and enrich the population of the villages and towns throughout the route.'

Recent diplomatic arrangements point to a development of this important region. By an agreement with the British Government in June 1897 the West River was at last opened to commerce, in tardy fulfilment of the policy of the Canton Commission of 1859, and facilities were arranged for the conduct of trade between Yun Nan and British Burma, the results of which may be seen in the near future.

CHAPTER XI

WAITING FOR WAR

1859-1860

WHILST the Canton Commission was quietly but surely restoring peace and prosperity to the South, a breeze from the North wrecked all hopes of a speedy settlement of the China question. The Emperor had agreed to the Treaty of Tien-tsin in 1858 in order to get the Allies out of their threatening position near his capital, but he had not changed his policy a hair's-breadth, and he and his Ministers had not the smallest intention of allowing the 'barbarians' to break down the old barriers which excluded them from intercourse with his Government and Court. Lord Elgin, in his ignorance of the Chinese character, was completely duped. Instead of demanding an audience of the Emperor, such as befitted the Queen's Ambassador, he did not even enter Peking. Instead of leaving an army at Tien-tsin to guarantee the fulfilment of the Treaty, he went away with his whole force. And afterwards at Shanghai, where he arranged the details of the tariff with the Imperial Commissioners, he committed the fatal blunder of retreating from the position of the Treaty, which established a resident British Minister at Peking, and sanctioning the suggestion that our Minister would only occasionally visit the capital. The result of this weakness became apparent when,

three months after Lord Elgin's departure from China, his brother, Mr Frederick Bruce, came out as Minister, to exchange the ratifications of the Treaty at Peking. The Chinese had taken Lord Elgin's measure, and identified it with the dimensions of the British Government. They had extorted a vital concession, and they resolved to make the most of their advantage. As soon as the fear of the allied armies was removed, they recovered all their former arrogance, and with a view to making a visit of a 'barbarian eye' to Peking impossible, they strengthened the Taku forts at the mouth of the Peiho, which Lord Elgin's force had dismantled in 1858. What happened was easy to be foreseen. On reaching Shanghai on 6th June 1859 Mr Bruce found that every obstacle was to be placed in the way of his approach to Peking; but his instructions were positive, and he had no alternative but to go on. He knew the Chinese better than his brother, and he was aware that 'anything which looked like hesitation or irresolution would encourage the Chinese and render the object of my mission more difficult to attain without a fresh appeal to force.' So to the Peiho he sailed, accompanied by the French Minister, M. de Bourboulon, and a considerable naval escort. On arriving at the mouth of the river on 20th June they found the channel staked and barred with a boom, and an armed rabble prepared to resist their landing. No mandarin was there to explain the situation. Persisting in their advance, they were beaten back with heavy loss.

Admiral Hope had calculated on no greater resistance than had been met with in 1858, when an hour and a quarter had sufficed to take the forts : he forgot that the Chinese had learned a bitter lesson, and had

spared no pains to prevent its repetition. They had contrived their boom admirably, and trained their guns upon it: and the result was that when the gunboats brought up against the obstacle they were exposed to a deadly fire. A land attack failed to carry the batteries; and when night fell the Taku forts were still in the possession of the Chinese. Admiral Hope could not venture upon a second attempt. He had lost three gunboats and several hundred killed and wounded. Nothing remained but to retreat and meditate vengeance. The Treaty had been deliberately broken, and all Lord Elgin's cautious policy had done was to bring matters back to the state in which they were when he first arrived in the North, 'As you were,' is an irritating word of command to a squad of raw recruits: but it merely implies unproficiency in the beginners. In statesmanship it means failure in the commander.

No one felt the blow more bitterly than the man who had always been opposed to the weak policy of 1858. He had dreaded failure, and had always doubted whether Mr Bruce would be received at Peking. He had discovered at Shektsing and forwarded to the Foreign Office a remarkable Chinese document, which showed that the Emperor was determined to break the Treaty; and now his worst fears were surpassed by the disastrous facts:—

'I write you a line under very unfavourable auspices (he wrote to Mr Lockhart, July 21), tired in body and sick at heart. The news of the terrible disaster off the Peiho reached us on the 19th, and this morning at 10 A.M. I left Canton to have a word with Mr Rumbold,*

* Sir Horace Rumbold, Bart., G.C.M.G., lately H.M. Minister at the Hague.

the Secretary of Legation, who goes home with the dispatches. . . . The defeat could scarcely have been more complete. Four hundred and sixty-four English and fourteen French *hors de combat*, out of a total of 1300 engaged; three vessels sunk and many more disabled; and worst of all, the gulf abandoned and everything at a standstill until reinforcements arrive from England, or India by orders from England. Thus we are just at the point we had arrived at in the spring of 1857.'

Three months later he adds (Canton, October 27) :—

'We shall have to wait another fortnight to know whether the Government have determined upon reading the Chinese another lesson and once for all putting their relations on an intelligible and durable footing. I cannot conceive their taking any other resolve than this, and when they hear the results of American conciliation and see how little this obtains, doubts as to the necessity of our proceedings being dictatorial would be removed, I should think, from every mind.'

Mr Bruce himself wrote to Parkes (16th August): 'I regret much that when the permanent residence was waived [by Lord Elgin], it was not laid down in detail what the reception of the Minister at Peking was to be. It would have soon appeared that the Chinese thought, when we abandoned the exercise of the former right, that we had virtually consented to accept the American article on the visit to Peking and go back from what was accorded to Lord Macartney.' What the 'American article' meant was clearly explained, when Mr Ward, the U.S. Minister, soon after the British repulse at the Peiho, consented to go up to Peking by way of Peh-tang—the way the Chinese wanted Mr Bruce to go. The American mission was treated exactly like 'tribute-bearers' from Lewchew: compelled to journey to the Peiho in rough springless

country carts, which tortured every nerve in the body ; shut up in a yamun at Peking, and forbidden to stir a step outside, or to see a soul beyond their prison-house. The Chinese Commissioners appointed to negotiate disdained to sit at the same table with the unfortunate Americans, and when they spoke of an audience with the Emperor, the *kotow* or prostration, as before a deity, was declared to be absolutely indispensable. Though they had eaten a fair amount of dirt, their sturdy republican knees would not bend to this ; and so they returned, without an audience, to Peh-tang, where they finally consented to exchange the ratifications of their Treaty.* So much for the policy of conciliation. As Wade (who was Chinese secretary to Mr Bruce's Legation) remarked, 'Ward's return quite clears *our chief*.'

A singular piece of evidence as to the Chinese view of the American Mission was discovered a year later. During his captivity in Peking, Parkes noticed a label pasted on a chair in his room : the inscription stated that the chair had been returned to the Government store after having been supplied for the use of 'the American *tribute-bearer* Ward.' Of course, to have accepted the humble attitude of Mr Ward would have been to give up all that the Treaty aimed at securing, to renounce our claim of equality, and to have reverted to the old position of the East India Company. If we went to Peking at all, it must be as a Sovereign Power to a Sovereign Power. Mr Bruce was perfectly right, and the Ministers at home, whose instructions he had obeyed, could do nothing less than support him.

* *Life and Letters of Dr S. Wells Williams*, by his Son, p. 314 ff. (1889).

As soon as the British Government had assured themselves that the repulse at the Taku forts had been ordered and approved by the Emperor of China, and that no apology was forthcoming, they decided on sending out 10,000 troops under Sir Hope Grant, a distinguished officer, who had been Brigade-Major to Lord Saltoun in the first China war, and had since commanded his regiment, the 9th Lancers, at Sobraon and Chillianwallah, and served with great credit throughout the Indian Mutiny. As before, the English were to have the support of the French ; and in order to mark the gravity of the measure, Lord Elgin was instructed to repair once more to China to complete the work he had begun, and see his brother properly instated as British Minister at Peking. People who did not approve Lord Elgin's proceedings said that as he had made the mess it was his business to mend it : but that is not the language of official dispatches. These decisions were taken in February 1860, and it was easy to foresee that nothing would be done at the Peiho till the autumn. It was one of the inconveniences of the geographical conditions that it took about a year before an insult could be wiped out.

Meanwhile affairs in Canton continued tranquil. The vast size of China has this advantage, that war may go on in one part without disturbing amicable relations in another. As far as the work of the Commission was concerned, there might never have been a repulse at the Peiho at all : so little was the hostile act felt down in the South. The garrison of Canton was strengthened, however, and preparations made for defence in case of a rising. Parkes's energies during the autumn of 1859 were chiefly directed to two objects, one of the utmost

importance to the mercantile community, the other no less vital to the peace and happiness of the Chinese inhabitants. The first was the selection of a site for the new British settlement, which was to take the place of the burnt factories. There were conflicting views about the best place to build on. Merchants and officials and Chinese differed, and a vast deal of correspondence passed on the subject. The potential convenience of the muddy flat by the site of the Shameen forts on the river side above the city had struck the authorities, and when Mr Bruce placed the decision absolutely in Parkes's hands (by a dispatch of 31st May) this site was chosen, in spite of the objections urged at first by the English merchants, and of the difficulty and delay involved in recovering it from the water. It was leased on a quit-rent, and the Chinese themselves contracted to recover it.

The other subject that engrossed his attention was the cruelty and illegality which disgraced the emigration system—or want of system—at Canton. An extract from a despatch of Consul Alcock will show the state of this abominable traffic in the spring of 1859:—

‘The acts of violence and fraud connected with the coolie trade at this port have lately reached such a pitch of atrocity that a general feeling of alarm spread through the population, accompanied by the degree of excitement and popular indignation which rendered it no longer possible or safe for any authority interested in the peace of the place to remain inactive. The intolerable extent and character of the evil has thus tended to work its own cure. When no man could leave his own house, even in public thoroughfares and open day, without a danger of being hustled, under false pretences of debt or delinquency, and carried off a prisoner in the hands of crimps, to be sold to the

purveyors of coolies at so much a head, and carried off to sea, never again to be heard of, the whole population of the city and adjoining districts were roused to a sense of common peril. That under such circumstances the people should attempt to protect themselves, by administering a wild justice of their own upon the persons of any of the nefarious gangs of crimps that fell into their hands, was a natural consequence of the supineness of the authorities. And accordingly, within the last ten days, several of the kidnappers have been killed by the mob with the vindictive cruelty to which the Cantonese, under less provocation, are well known to be addicted.'

The Commanders-in-Chief and the Commissioners of Canton did their best to check these outrages, but proclamations and police effected little change; the river and even the streets were not safe from the native coolie crimps, who were highly paid by American and other agents, and would risk a good deal for their reward of thirty dollars a head; and some complete reform in the method of permitting emigration was loudly called for. At Shanghai the proceedings of the crimps led to a serious riot, in which H. N. Lay was dangerously wounded. To Mr John Gardiner Austin, who was charged by the home Colonial Secretary to arrange for a supply of coolies for the West Indies, belongs the credit of initiating a complete change in the system. He put himself in communication with Parkes, who brought his influence to bear upon the new Governor-General Laou, and was pleased to discover a corresponding eagerness on the part of the Chinese officials and leading gentry, without whose co-operation it would have been difficult to carry out the reform. The suppression of the pernicious system of crimps was agreed upon, together

with the abolition of depots for coolies on foreign vessels which defied control ; and an Emigration House, directed by Mr. Austin, was established at Canton for the reception of all coolies who wished to emigrate to the West Indies. 'The distinguishing feature of this emigration,' wrote Parkes to Mr Bruce, November 10, 'is that it has the earnest support and co-operation of the local Chinese Government, and that the regulations under which it is to be conducted, and the rigorous surveillance of the Allied Authorities to which it is subject, provide the fullest protection for the emigrants and render all coercion in their engagement or shipment impossible.'

The Emigration House was opened in November, and worked admirably. The Minister, Mr Bruce, expressed his warm approval of the plan and reported it in terms of high commendation to Lord John Russell (5th December). Referring to Parkes's share in it, he said that his 'energy and knowledge of the language and habits of the people have enabled him to render great service to this good cause'; and commenting later on the working of the plan he added, 'the scheme has hitherto been successful beyond anticipation.' Man-stealing gave place to free emigration, and although clandestine kidnapping could not be abolished by a stroke of the pen, so far as England was concerned the abuses of the coolie traffic were things of the past.* Few subjects had so thoroughly engrossed Parkes's interest. He felt that, in his wilderness of official quill-driving, here at last was an oasis of pure practical benevolence.

* See the interesting Blue-Book, 1860 [168], Correspondence respecting Emigration from Canton.

During the preceding four or five years the most valuable of all biographical materials, private letters, have been scarce: but from 1860 there is no such deficiency. In March of that year Mrs Parkes left China to return to England. She was not in good health, and the climate was not suited to her little girl, and this, more than the disturbed state of affairs and the prospect of another war, determined her husband to send his family home. From this time until their happy reunion in England in 1862, the biographer possesses the advantage of an ample and intimate correspondence. If proof were needed, these letters would be evidence convincing enough of the perfect happiness and union of these two. She was deeply interested in everything that he did; she understood the problems with which he had to deal, and was eager to learn every step he took in the political complications of the time. Hence his letters are not merely love-letters—though they are that in no ordinary degree: they are also full of his views on all the events that were agitating the Far East, and they contain a minute record of his thoughts and acts during a momentous epoch in the history of European relations with China.

The very first letter of this interesting correspondence notices an important step which was taken at his own suggestion: this was the lease of the Kowloon peninsula opposite Hongkong by the British Government. Kowloon was the invariable refuge of the pirates, robbers, and criminals in general who infested the Bogue, and its possession was almost essential to Hongkong on military as well as civil grounds. Its sandy plain was also wanted immediately for quarter-

to be up at six, so was doubtless glad when I finished my conversation.

'Up at six myself also, prepared a few papers for General Grant, and met him at the Commissariat landing-place at half-past seven, where I said good-bye. Rode back with General van Straubenzee, and urged him to name at once a third Commissioner. He asked me if I knew any one, and I suggested Major Pownall. The General evidently had the same man in mind himself. . . . In the course of the day it was arranged that he should have the appointment. I now broached my plan of going to the North, and found it met with no opposition. . . . Friday and Saturday were hard days indeed. Pownall came and I put him up in Major Taylor's room, who had returned to Hongkong. I had a great discussion with Martineau, the General, and D'Aboville on emigration, which I wanted to see closed altogether for several good reasons on 30th April. Encountered opposition on the French side, but eventually carried the point, with a loss of about five hours' time, during which I had to pay two visits to the Heights and to go through the usual ordeal of being taken by the General to D'Aboville. That little man cannot look upon me with favour, for whenever I go to him it is to take the opposition in the discussion of business. Every minute of Friday and Saturday was engaged, and much of Sunday also:—so many things had to be put in train to give Pownall a fair chance of understanding what was before him. . . . Took to my dispatches after dinner of dire necessity, Cooper the faithful keeping me company. This done at twelve I then began to pack and put away things. Got all done by half-past three and then to bed. Up at half-past five, had my hair cut, and got on board the *Willamette* in good time after calling on Winchester on the way. Thus you will see how every moment of the past week was occupied.'

A change to Shanghai, and complete rest from the duties of the Commission, were urgently needed, and when Mr Dent offered to take him up in his steamer, Parkes felt that 'the opportunity we had often wished for' had really come in the nick of time. 'If I am to feel always as I have done to-day, I shall certainly need a change, for there is a weight upon me which I feel I must be relieved of, or I cannot stand it.' Accordingly he gladly accepted the invitation, and sailed on the *Yang-tsze* on the morning of the 27th March. Everything of importance had been settled at Canton and he 'felt as blithe and joyous as a schoolboy.'

The visit to Shanghai was much more, in reality, than a mere holiday trip. The port was to be his Consulate* after he had done with the Canton Commission, and it was interesting to look at the place which he had not seen for many years, and to speculate on the life he would lead there with the wife who was continually in his thoughts. He planned all sorts of pleasures and comforts for her—'no more of roughing, as in the little house at Canton—took stock of the Consulate, talked of a carriage, and made the best of the ruinous extravagance of the place. Small houses were rented at £300 and £400 a year. The style of living was very luxurious and prices were exorbitant. People like Mr John Dent and Mr Webb could afford to keep their French cooks and live *en prince*, for Messrs

* He had already been appointed Consul at Shanghai in February 1859, when he was also created a Companion of the Bath in recognition of his splendid services at Canton; but the post was temporarily filled, during his absence on the Commission, by T. T. Meadows. The Consulate was no longer in the City, as it had been in 1848, but in the British settlement.

Dent and Co. had already made nearly a quarter of a million out of the newly-opened Japan trade. But it might be difficult for a Consul to keep up his position in so expensive a place. Parkes, however, made light of the drawbacks, and drew nothing but sunny pictures of their future life at Shanghai to cheer his wife in England.

But Shanghai just then possessed more than a personal interest. It was the centre of the political situation. In coming there for change and rest, he had really taken the best possible step for his public career. It put him again in touch with the political leaders, and brought his remarkable powers prominently before the eyes of the Minister, from whom his isolation at Canton had hitherto separated him. Mr Bruce was much impressed with his clear insight into Chinese affairs, and begged him to be his guest, that they might discuss the situation at their leisure; and it was doubtless due in some degree to the opinions then formed by his brother that Lord Elgin afterwards discovered the necessity of calling Parkes to the front in the ensuing campaign.

'To his Wife, April 8.—The reply from Peking to the ultimatum has been received and is very unfavourable! There is therefore only one course now open to us, and that a hostile one. But as our forces are not yet up, we are not ready to do anything, and if we are to wait for the French it may be six weeks or two months before we are ready to begin. . . . Mr Bruce's views are very sound. Further negotiation is out of the question. The real animus of the Chinese Government is shown in the reply, which is that they never intended nor do intend, if they can avoid it, to carry out the Elgin Treaty. It was granted by them against their will, and we omitted all precautions necessary to ensure its being [carried]

out—I mean in quitting Tien-tsin as we did in July 1858 instead of remaining there until the Treaty had been actually carried into effect. You will recollect in what a hurry the Admiral and Lord Elgin one and all were to leave and run off to recreate in Japan and elsewhere. By that step they just undid all they had previously done, and having once got us out of the river the Chinese proceeded to take steps to prevent our return, and to rescind all the provisions of the Treaty (the residence in Peking in particular) to which they objected, but *without which the Treaty is not worth a straw*, and our relations would always be imperilled.'

Meanwhile the 'gathering of the clans' continued; Shanghai was filling with officers, and the marines voted it 'a very dull hole.' Parkes nevertheless found as much gaiety as he cared for. He describes a dinner party at the Legation, where the wife of the French Minister, an inveterate smoker, picked out 'the biggest of big cigars' and rattled off French and Spanish songs, 'while Lady Grant sat very quietly on the sofa and made only mental remarks. Sir Hope Grant is a great musician, and plays beautifully on the violoncello and on the piano.' Indeed it was his 'cello playing (besides his soldierly qualities) that so strongly recommended him to Lord Saltoun when that musical General was looking out for a brigade-major in the first China war. Parkes took few walks, contrary to his habit, for he found the country around Shanghai uninteresting, and by the end of his stay he felt he had had enough of the place, and would 'return to my own shop at Canton with the reflection that I might be worse employed.'

The first step in the new campaign was (as usual) the occupation of Chusan: it was considered a useful base, and its loss disheartened the Chinese. Parkes assisted in the invasion:—

*‘April 17.—I go on board the *Granada* to-morrow morning, and accompany General Grant first to Chusan and then to Hongkong. This little deviation will be very pleasant to me, as Chusan is very fair to look upon, and Shanghai is quite the contrary. . . . The mail brings a confirmation of the reports of Lord Elgin’s return. I am sorry for it, and I think the Government are throwing the fat in the fire by sending him. With the force he will have, I could have thoroughly trusted Mr Bruce’s management, if *backed by the confidence* of the Home Government.’*

Having seen the first step of the war taken, he returned to his duties at Canton at the close of April, where the progress of the Tai Ping rebels in the neighbouring country caused no little alarm. In the disturbed and anxious state of the public mind, Parkes thought it desirable to extend his system of patrols, and organized a service of long beats in the neighbouring country, in which he himself took part. He was too busy to be able to spare much time for change of air and scene; but he had to go to Hongkong now and then to confer with the naval and military authorities on the question of the defences of Canton, and though he confessed he ‘had no affection for the place,’ the island had become much more pleasant to him since Government House had changed hands. He always enjoyed his visits to Sir Hercules and Lady Robinson. Of course he had no direct official connexion with the Governor, whose authority was now limited to the Crown Colony. Mr Bruce, who exercised the functions of Plenipotentiary and Superintendant of Trade from Shanghai, in default of Peking, was Parkes’s chief. Still there were many points of common interests and policy to be discussed between the Governor of Hongkong and the

Commissioner of Canton, and it was a relief to talk them over with a man of large views and wide experience such as Sir Hercules Robinson.

A greater than he was now coming on the stage of Chinese politics, for the second act:—

*'Hongkong, June 23.—Tumbling on shore as speedily as possible, I learned from Mr Wiener that the mail had come in, . . . that Lord Elgin had come and was at Government House, and that the *Malabar* [the ship on which the ambassador had embarked] had been wrecked in Galle harbour. . . . After breakfast [on the 22nd] I went up to Government House and amid many interruptions remained talking to the Earl for upwards of two hours. He was very confidential and sensible in all his remarks: admits that he has come out chiefly because by doing so he found that he could close a number of mouths that would otherwise have been clamorous and troublesome to the Goverment; but appears by no means disposed to give in to the Chinese, and wishes that the Commanders-in-Chief had made greater advances and had already taken the Taku forts. The chances of this job having to be undertaken do not diminish.'*

Parkes had hitherto found no cause either to like or believe in Lord Elgin. The Ambassador had treated the interpreters very much *de haut en bas* during his first mission, and there was hardly one who did not resent it. Moreover Lord Elgin identified Parkes personally with the violent and domineering policy which he attributed to Anglo-China, and owed him a grudge for the *Arrow* affair, which he never saw in its true perspective. Parkes on his side thought 'the Earl' supercilious and essentially weak: he disliked and deprecated his cautious perfunctory policy, and augured no good from his return. Had he seen the ambassador's journal during the voyage out, he would

have found his worst apprehensions confirmed: for there Lord Elgin confessed that 'what is desired is a speedy settlement, on reasonable terms—as good terms as possible;—but let the settlement be speedy. This, I think, is the fixed idea of all.' Nevertheless it was not to be quite the old story over again. In the interval between the two missions Lord Elgin had discovered that there was more in the Chinese problem than was accounted for in his philosophy, and he recognized in Parkes, apart from personal predilections, the man who could best fill in the blanks in his political science. He took some pains to make himself agreeable, and, what Parkes valued far more, he took him into his confidence. It is very evident that the interview on the 22nd June produced a favourable impression on the uncompromising Commissioner, and this was strengthened by further intercourse.

'Canton, June 29.—I went up to Government House, where I lunched and remained for three hours. Lord Elgin received callers, and I slipped in whenever he was left alone and discussed affairs with him. He was very kind, and seemed to enjoy his conversation with me. He said that the way in which affairs had been managed at Canton had given satisfaction at home, so much so, indeed, as almost (strange to say) to occasion him some embarrassment: for when he, being opposed to a march upon Peking, had pointed out the difficulties of our holding and governing a city of that immense extent, the advocates of such a movement quoted Canton—its good order and the beneficial results that had followed on its capture—as an argument in favour of our attempting Peking if necessary. . . .'

'Lord Elgin has no easy task before him. These Chinese questions instead of reaching a settlement have only attained a greater growth, and now give promise of greater trouble than ever. Our mild undecided policy

has had much to do with this, and Lord Elgin must feel that matters must now be promptly arranged or they will become very serious. The Government at home appear ready to do anything almost to get the matter off their hands, but the evil that they have to take in hand is not one that can be dealt with rapidly. It is not sufficient—as we have so often seen—to make engagements with the Chinese: we must also see them executed, and this latter is a slow process. . . . In China *occupation* for a longer or shorter period must follow any advance. To take a place to-day and give it up again as soon as you have a written promise to carry out a compact is of no avail, and therefore it is difficult to see how the Government can possibly attain their aim of getting this affair entirely 'off their hands,' and the French troops also out of the country. Besides we may find that the French troops are not so desirous as we are to leave China, and we cannot allow them to remain here by themselves. They, the French, have a strong notion that China can be made to support any expedition, and it is only a fear of expense and consequences that deters them from making war on the World. . . . Then there is another great complication—in the rebellion, especially in view of the recent advances of the insurgents in the neighbourhood of Shanghai. They continue to hold Soochow and to advance upon Hangchow, and if they get both those cities the injury done to the commerce and general resources of the Empire will be very great. Already is trade at Shanghai at an end, and the mandarins are at their wits' ends.

'Thus Lord Elgin has a threefold difficulty to contend with—(1) Our own questions with the mandarins; (2) The rebellion, which is now beginning to affect us so directly that we must have something to say to it shortly although we have so long striven to have nothing to say to it; (3) The French alliance, which hamstrings all our movements both in respect to present and future operations.'

CHAPTER XII

THE MARCH TO PEKING

1860

WHEN Parkes returned to Canton after his conversations with Lord Elgin at Hongkong, he fell into the routine of his work without any expectation of being called away to the seat of war. The campaign would, he believed, be waged without his aid ; the Ambassador had Wade to interpret for him ; and nothing remained but to wait patiently at the old yamen for news from the North. He forgot that, whatever Lord Elgin's personal wishes might be, there were two men at Shanghai (whither his Excellency had repaired) who were extremely anxious to have the advantage of Parkes's counsel and energy in the serious business to come. Mr Bruce was full of praise of the indomitable commissioner ; and Wade was eager to have him for a colleague. The result was a letter from Lord Elgin requesting him, if he could be spared from his important duties, to join him at once in the North. Of course he must be spared ; and though he professed that the appointment caused him no elation and that all he now cared for was 'something like a settlement' of the question, and then relief and change and rest in England, it was in the nature of a *nolo episcopari*, and he would have been miserable if he had been left behind in the hour of action.

Overwork, anxiety, and the long loneliness of his separation from his beloved wife, had told upon his spirits. He had got into a depressed state which was unlike his old self. The truth is, he had begun public life too early, and eighteen years more or less filled with responsible labour had told severely upon his health. His nerves had suffered grievously under the perpetual irritation of Chinese diplomacy. A few years before he would have hurrah'd at such an invitation as Lord Elgin's: but now life and work seemed grey and cold. But he deceived himself in fancying that he was not glad of the chance of playing a part in a big drama. His weariness and ennui soon passed away when he was actually in the field, and in spite of all his dangers and privations, in spite of a narrow escape of a Chinese headsman's sword, he would not willingly have foregone the experiences now to be related.

He sailed on 21st July in the trooper *Urgent*, carrying stores to the North, and took 'old Chang' with him as attendant. A box and portmanteau held all his clothes, another box his papers, a third his books, and a package of two blankets, pillow, two saddles, and a gun and pistol completed his outfit for the campaign. 'I am glad,' he wrote, 'that we are going direct to the Gulf of Pechihli. I am in that frame of mind that cares nought for greetings in the market-places. I care little for whatever would divert me from the work that is set me to do. What that work will be, I know not, but I am anxious to get at it speedily, that it may be the sooner concluded. It appears to me as if we were entering on the third and last act of the Chinese drama, which when finished will give

opportunity to the actors large and small to step on one side and recover from the toil and turmoil. So let us go at it with a will, and get it over as soon as we can.'

The story will be told in his graphic letters to his wife. During each day's work he jotted down in pencil brief memoranda of what took place; and in the evening, in tent or hut, under a dim light, and surrounded by talk and joviality, squatted on the ground with his knees for a desk, he scribbled these vivid descriptions of the campaign.

The English had been ready for the attack by the end of June, but the French were behindhand—as they were throughout the campaign,—and General Montauban (afterwards Comte de Palikao) actually proposed amusing his force at Shanghai by retaking Soochow from the rebels in the interests of the very Imperial Government which he was about to attack in the North. Of course Mr Bruce put a stop to this, but the mere plan had delayed the French preparations:—

July 25.—Lord Elgin and Baron Gros were annoyed when they found on their arrival not only that the Peiho forts had not been taken, but that the allies were not ready to commence the attack. On finding out who was in fault, he [Lord Elgin] intimated to General Montauban that unless the French arrangements could be speedily completed he would authorize the English force to act alone. This had the effect of sending Montauban off to the Gulf *chop chop*, and Lord Elgin started himself on the 5th July and was followed by Baron Gros on the 7th. Our force has rendezvoused in the Bay of Talién (or Talién Wan, *wan* is "bay" in Chinese), on the north side of the Gulf of Pechihli; the French in the harbour of Chefoo on

the south side. . . . The forts will be summoned, the Chinese will refuse to surrender them, they will then be taken, Tien-tsin occupied, and when the Allies will have returned to precisely the position which they quitted with such unwise haste in June 1858, they will find the Chinese quite as ready to negotiate, and in a month after the forts are taken Lord Elgin will probably find himself, as a friendly visitor, within Peking. The great puzzle is what guarantees can be taken that will ensure good faith on the part of the Chinese when matters again wear the appearance of being settled. . . .

'I am now glad that Lord Elgin and Baron Gros have come out. The French require a good deal of keeping in order, and until Baron Gros arrived their naval and military commanders ranked *above* M. de Bourboulon, who had consequently very little influence with them and could do little therefore to restrain their acts and opinions, which were and are often very ill judged. This dreadful alliance is a very very great reason for our devoutly desiring a speedy settlement of the question. They do us no good and act in fact in every respect just like a drag upon our coach. They use our stores, get in our way at all points, and retard all our movements. . . . It is well that we have Lord Elgin here, as he has unlimited power, and of course the full confidence both of Government and people as well: anything he does will be approved. . . .'

One might imagine that Parkes was telling the history of the Crimean war, so parallel are the cases: there was not a man in the army or in the Embassy who did not wish the French away, and as the campaign went on England had every reason to regret the renewal of the alliance which had been her bane in the Crimea.

'*July 31.*—The next morning [28th July] we ran into Talién bay, the place of rendezvous for our

squadron prior to moving on the Peiho. We found that the fleet had left on the 26th. It is a magnificent bay, Talien Wan, but I cannot stay to describe what we did not stay to look at, for the fleet not being there we did not anchor, but after receiving a visit from the senior naval officer started off again and pulled fast to catch up the fleet. . . . The appearance of the fleet was very imposing—stretching over seven miles of ground, or water rather; but there was nothing else but ships and water, as from the shoalness of the latter and the flatness of the shore we were altogether out of sight of land. Captain —— started off to report himself to the Admiral, and I went with him, as a means of getting on board this vessel, the *Feroos*, which is set apart for Lord Elgin and suite. . . .

‘During the morning [30th] General Grant came on board and asked Lord Elgin if he could have me with him, which was assented to on Lord Elgin’s part and my own, when it was given me distinctly to understand that I was to accompany the General *on duty*, and by no means as an amateur. I have no taste for going into frizzling affairs in the latter capacity, but when duty requires me to go I can of course have no hesitation. It was arranged that the landing should take place at daylight, but when dawn broke it was found that there was too much sea to render this practicable, so everything had to be postponed until to-morrow. . . . Colonel Crealock,* Mr Loch,† Wortley,‡ and myself go on to-morrow morning, leaving Lord Elgin only Wade and Mr Thurlow.§ It is no use telling you what we expect to do. . . . Simply I may

* Military Secretary to the Embassy. He had served through the seige of Sevastopol, the 1856 attack on Canton, and the Mutiny.

† Private Secretary to Lord Elgin; afterwards Lord Loch, Governor and High Commissioner of Cape Colony.

‡ Hon. J. F. Stuart Wortley, attaché to the Embassy.

§ Hon. T. J. Hovell Thurlow, attaché to the Embassy; now Lord Thurlow.

say that the plan is to *land* and *form* at Peh-tang and then to make a combined attack by land and sea on the six forts and Tien-tsin.

'August 4.—It was nearly ten [on the 1st inst.] when the Admiral came up in *Coromandel* and took us [General and staff] on board: and as we moved in, a small swarm of gunboats came steaming out of the fleet at various points, each having boats filled with troops or stores in tow, and took up the stations the Admiral assigned them. The Admiral then led in slowly, often having to stop for some stray vessel to come up. The French had also their flotilla, which followed Admiral Hope's directions also. At about twelve we sighted the Peh-tang forts and those of the Peiho. . . . At 2 P.M. *Coromandel* anchored at about 2000 yards below the forts of Peh-tang, the plan being that the troops should be landed at this point, wade across a mud flat to the shore, and take the forts in reverse as the gunboats moved up in front. As we approached, the forts hoisted their flags, and a small force of about 100 cavalry turned out on a road or raised causeway which we concluded formed the line of communication between these forts and those of the Peiho, distant about six or seven miles. The object of coming to Peh-tang was, first, to obtain a spot where our landing might be effected without molestation, and secondly, to take the Peiho forts in reverse by marching from Peh-tang across the country to the rear of the said forts.

'The flotilla being up, the question [was] how were the men to be got on shore. We had in face of us the forts, one (the northern) mounting [eleven] and the other (the southern) [thirteen] guns, with two mamelons or towers in the former and one in the latter, all on the principle of the Peiho forts which are so strongly constructed. These forts, as I say, were looking us in the face; but on both sides of us there was nothing but a long mud flat, and the practicability of landing

on the latter seemed doubtful. The possibility indeed depended on the character of the mud, whether it was hard or soft, and it was necessary also that something should be ascertained respecting the approaches to the forts. So it was determined that a party should land to reconnoitre. Generals Grant and Montauban being themselves of the party, I accompanied the former. We pulled over the flat until the boats stuck aground, when we had to take to the water, which was at first about knee deep (with the generality of men, but a little higher in *my* case), and were rejoiced to find a comparatively hard bottom, and about four or five hundred yards of wading brought us to dry land. But instead of advancing their reconnoitring party, the Generals, being well pleased with being able to get on shore so easily, passed the word for all the men to land, and as this was a work of time, we having three regiments and the French the same, we did not move forward until about half-past six. We then went across the flat to the causeway, distant about two miles, having at times firm sand, at others mud and water to push through. . . .

' Pending much rushing backwards and forwards, I lost the General, as did others of his staff, and having found a dry sandy patch of ground we halted there, and those who had blankets prepared for a bivouac. We had nothing to eat or drink, nor had I anything to sleep on, so the precaution of a double breakfast and a snack on board *Coromandel* came in useful. Still it is astonishing, when one has really hard physical work, how very thirsty if not hungry you become, and I would gladly have eaten and drunken again if I had had the means. Fortunately Major Taylor spared me a biscuit, half a glass of water, and half of his blanket, so I was tolerably well off.

' I had composed myself when Biddulph* came riding

* Military Secretary to Sir Hope Grant; afterwards General Sir Robert Biddulph, G.C.M.G., High Commissioner of Cyprus and Governor of Gibraltar.

up saying that he had found the General, who had gained the head of the column on the causeway and was near the town and wanted an interpreter. So I got up and with Biddulph, who had to relinquish his horse, recommenced the wading process, and on this occasion, having had to cross a soft nullah, got rather muddier than before. Reached the General at about 9.30, just as Frank Grant* came up to him with a report that he and young Mr Gibson (a student interpreter attached to the troops) had reached the town, found the people friendly, and that all the [Chinese] troops had left with the exception of seventy or eighty men who had shut themselves in the fort and resolved to defend it. . . . So I said to the General that if I went into the town I might make an arrangement with them and prevent the lives of thousands being risked by a slight stupid resistance to an overwhelming force. The General said "Go, by all means, and do get the forts for me in a quiet way, for it will save a deal of trouble." As I was starting, up came a man with a small packet of refreshments, a sandwich or two, and a couple of bottles of claret. I got a glass of the latter before starting, and some water also, which was nectar.

'Passing our outpost I asked the officer for a file of men, and two officers also came with me in the hope of getting water, for which the men were calling out. They were lying or sitting on a narrow [bank] with a salt water swamp on either side of them, with water, as it were, to their lips which they could not taste. On entering the town I found myself surrounded by a crowd, and told them that I had brought them a message from the General, which if attended to would be the means of saving the lives of many of them; that the place would be attacked the next morning both by gunboats and troops at 4 A.M.; and that they would be very foolish if they allowed their interests and lives to be imperilled

* 5th Lancers, on the staff.

by the act of a few soldiers who probably cared nothing for the people. They heard my speech with acclamation, declared, in reply to my demand whether they wanted to live or to die, that they preferred the former, and also that *all* the soldiers had left the place. In proof of this they were willing, they said, to take me to the forts and give them over to me, only I must be careful of the *mines* with which they were filled.

'It did not do to shrink from the transaction, so having got water for the officers and sent back one of them with two men of the place, who, I said to the people, would be hung if I did not return at twelve o'clock; and with the other officer,* who volunteered, young Gibson, and my three soldiers, I proceeded to take possession of the principal or southern fort. We had to traverse a populous but most filthy town, and though well accustomed to Chinese stenches I confess that this surpassed all that I had before experienced. The streets were unpaved and nearly knee deep in mud. Arriving at the fort, closed and barricaded, I insisted upon the people breaking open the gate, and on entering it I found the fort, which is of very large size, empty alike of soldiers and artillery, except six guns of a very old structure—*wood* and iron. The mines, however, were more numerous.—I am called off, and find that I have had a whole hour to myself, so can't complain. (To be continued.)

'*August 6th, Monday.*— . . . I think when I left off my last note we were standing in the Peh-tang fort, examining the mines or the places where they were laid. We then took down all the flags from the ramparts and the mantlets or masks from the embrasures—those wretched things which they threw down just before they opened that dreadful fire upon the gunboats last year. This revealed to all those outside (when daylight permitted them to look) that

* Captain Williams, 1st Royals, D.A.Q.M.G.

in these forts there was no armament whatever, saving six wretched guns which scarcely admitted of being fired off. By when we had done this it was past eleven, and I thought of the two poor beings who had been threatened with hanging at twelve (although they were never safer than at that moment), and to save their feelings, as well as to report success, our party toddled back as fast as we could, I taking away with me, however, six of the best men I could pick out of those around to represent the people of the place in whose name the surrender of the forts could be made, and whose presence with us might prevent mischief during the night in case any soldiers or others took troublesome ideas into their heads.

'On reaching General Grant I found him lying on the causeway asleep, but he did not think it worth while to send a party at once to the fort to hoist our colours there, but merely communicated the fact to the French General. The fear is that the gunboats might at any time open fire, for according to the plan they began to move slowly up at midnight, with guns run out ready to pour in a storm of shell if the fort had shown the least sign of hostility. At this time, too, an eclipse of the moon came on, and all the circumstances combined made a very impressive scene:—

'First there was an army of 4000 or more men lying stretched on a muddy causeway of about fifteen feet broad, which twined its way like a snake through a salt-water lagoon. Nothing could be seen of the ground we were upon but mud-flats on either side of us, which became covered with water as the tide rose, and emitted a pestiferous stench. Of course not one of those 4000 men had a bed of any kind, but lay on the ground in their clothes and arms. On one side rose the forts and town of Peh-tang, as grim and obscure as mud (of which the place is constructed) can make such buildings. Then, as I said before, at twelve o'clock the gunboats, some ten or a dozen, began creeping

column had found it necessary to occupy a place I should have stayed there, for a time at least. So one has to put on a haversack containing necessaries, a pistol and pouch full of ammunition, a glass, a water bottle, a mackintosh or something of the kind, an umbrella (indispensable either for sun or rain), all of which combine to make a man feel loaded and to find it heavy work in the mud, which from its tenacious clayey character is always disputing for the possession of your boots or shoes.

'However, off we went, I feeling as if I had not had half enough sleep. Ponies could not be got, as they had not been landed; so we were on foot. After two hours' march we found the enemy at the end of the causeway, that is, a picket only, which fired at us, and then fell back upon an intrenched camp about a mile beyond. Sangkolinsin may be a brave man, but happily he can have but a very imperfect knowledge of war, or he would never have allowed us to land at Peh-tang without opposition, or erected no fortification upon this causeway. A few guns posted at the end of it would have given us a great deal of trouble. When attacked the French were in front, but as soon as we could get to the end of the causeway we formed up and threw out skirmishers, who began exchanging shots with the enemy. They were all cavalry and manœuvred very prettily and with much precision, sometimes extending on both flanks at a gallop as if they intended to sweep round us, and then as rapidly concentrating again. When just within range of the gingals, our force was halted, and two small French three-pounders opened fire, but without much effect. The result was that the enemy expecting an attack prepared to repel it: but it was no part of the two brigadiers' instructions to attack, but simply to make a reconnaissance; and so they sent into the town to say what they had found and to ask whether they were to retire. Of course it took about two hours to get an

effeminate young man, under their control, and is considerably inflated, first, with the victories he has gained over rebels, and secondly with the success of Peiho last year. It is said that he is determined to fight again in spite of the wish of the Emperor to the contrary. . . .

'About nine I ran into a Chinese house and made my toilette, having the luxury of a jar of water; soap, towel, brush and comb, etc., I carried in my haversack. But I was at a loss with respect to a covering for my feet, for when I drew off my boots I found it impossible to get them on again; they had become saturated with mud and wet, and my feet had swelled and blistered. I prevailed on the owner of the house to sell me a pair of his shoes, which though certainly ill-looking enough were at least comfortable to the feet; and thus attired I proceeded with General and Admiral up the Peh-tang river to reconnoitre. . . .

'I found that General Grant had determined to send out a thousand men to see what the force observed in the afternoon were doing, as it might be that they had schemes upon our causeway upon which everything depended. The French General was also to send a similar force. It seemed a good opportunity for collecting information, so the General said he would be glad if I accompanied the column, and I on my part was nothing loth. Laid down on my blankets at 10 P.M., and rose the next morning [3rd] at 3 A.M., Major Réboul and Loch going also. Four o'clock had been named as the hour at which the troops were to move off, and we encountered them in the streets proceeding to the rendezvous. What work it was to get along! Streets full of mud and men, and nasty slippery mud too, which would give you a purl and bring you down in the slush before you knew where you were. The difficulty on such occasions is to know how to accoutre yourself. It might be an affair of a few hours or it might be one of days, for supposing the

people that we will protect them (as *we* did tell them by proclamation when we entered the town), for we don't, and with the French in company I don't think we can. . . .

'Yesterday [7th] a council of war was held . . . and our movements were determined on. From the French we experience only difficulty and delay: so General Grant told them yesterday that, however he might regret their being unprepared, he must move on his men, as it was simply sacrificing an army to keep them inactive. The French are ill-found in the first place, and their means of transport are very defective.'

On the 9th, however, heavy rain came on, and the troops were 'in a sea of mud.' An advance was impossible until the weather changed, which it fortunately did in a few days. The armies marched out of Peh-tang on the 12th, took Tang-ku, a fortified place in the rear of the Peiho forts, on the 14th, and set to work to bring up provisions, reconnoitre, and throw a bridge across the river. The slowness of the progress was little to the taste of so energetic a nature, but Parkes admits that 'we cannot afford anything like a reverse, the forts are evidently too strong to be taken with a rush,' and the cautious game was the safest. Patience was soon rewarded by a signal success:—

'*Tien-tsin, August 26.*—The 22nd was by God's blessing a glorious day for us. The whole of the forts, contrary to all expectation, fell into our hands. . . . [On 21st] I rode out with Biddulph to the front to see General Napier's* arrangements for the attack on the nearest northern fort (marked A in enclosed plan).† The General kindly explained many things to us, and the thought that many dead men must be lying almost

* Afterwards Field-Marshal Lord Napier of Magdala.

† See map opposite.



Ho-ss.



on the ground on which we then stood (under cover) within a few hours leant a painful interest to the scene. I had been up to this same fort in the morning with a flag of truce to summon them to surrender, but also to find out in what condition the fort was, and the character of the ditches, palisades, abattis, spikes, etc. etc. which we found defended it. The Chinese observed to some extent the behaviour of last year. All the mantlets (or masks) of the embrasures were down, and not a man was to be seen (from a distance) in any of the forts. As I and my single companion (Major Graham* of the Engineers) drew near, we were warned off, and the officer in command would not receive any message; so I did not deliver it, but yet managed, by not understanding what he said, and being obliged to go close to hear him, etc., to give Major Graham time to make many useful observations. I am afraid this was scarcely fair play, but if they objected to our approaching the fort they ought by the rules of war to have sent people out to meet us. The glance we had showed that the fort was as full as it could hold of men, although they were carefully kept out of view. Hardly had our reconnoitring party retired, before they opened fire upon us, and they did the same with our working parties as they formed batteries within 1000 and 800 yards of the fort during the night.

The next morning they again commenced the engagement, but by that time our arrangements were complete and we opened fire from six batteries. They returned from both the northern forts and the nearest southern fort (A, B, and C) with much spirit, and occasionally fired from D and E, but a few guns only of those forts were within range. We were to start from camp, four miles off, at 5 A.M., and just as we were mounting we heard firing commence. In half

* The late General Sir Gerald Graham, V.C., K.C.B., G.C.M.G., the distinguished Crimean officer, whose Sawakin expeditions are fresh in every one's memory.

an hour we were on the scene. My post was, I considered, near General Grant until the *assault* was ordered, and with that I considered that in my character of a married man I had nothing to do. Our batteries were gradually advanced up to 500 yards of the fort, and the scene as the engagement warmed up became one of great interest. I had never seen fighting done in such a *regular* way before, or such masses of men moved. I think we had about 1200 artillerymen and 2000 infantry engaged. The French had also some 1500 men. Notwithstanding our large guns, however (though the enemy's were larger), we did not do much in the breaching way, and it was not until a heavy firing had been kept up for two and a half hours that the assault was ordered. We were full of admiration for the way in which the Chinese fought their guns. At 6.30 their magazine blew up with a dreadful explosion that for some time hid the whole fort from view and caused a lull in the battle; and yet for an hour after they remained steadily at their guns. In the end we had to run up guns almost to the gate of the fort to cover the working party who laid down the bridge. The marines had the honour of forming part of the assaulting party, and they also carried the pontoons. The French attacked at a different point, and the emulation among the troops to see who, French or English, should be first on the wall, was very great. It is difficult to say who was first. Our flag was the first *hoisted*,* but a Frenchman had waved a minute or two previously a French flag as he got on the wall, but was shot down. I was 500 yards distant from the fort at the time of assault, so could see it all very clearly. It is my business to be in forts *directly after* they are captured, to seize papers, examine prisoners, etc.

* The Queen's colour of the 67th, planted by Ensign Chaplin, who was twice wounded in the assault (BOWLBY, in *Times*, 3rd November 1860).

'At two or three minutes past eight, that is after a stiff engagement that lasted just three hours, the fort was won. The enemy suffered fearfully. The General commanding-in-chief under Prince Sangkolinsin was shot,—Lieutenant-General also,—and above 1000 men killed and wounded. The horrors of the scene defy description. No one had been suffered to run from the fort by the Chinese—men being told off to cut down any who attempted to run: indeed all escape was prevented by the fort being barricaded; so they fell where they fought.

'Fort B took an active part in the engagement, pitching into us with effect, and receiving a good return not only from us on land side but also from gunboats. We had also to keep up a sharp fire on Fort C, because it flanked us as we approached A, and occasionally to give D a gun; so that the cross-firing was really something on a grand scale. General Grant had always maintained that Fort A was the key to the whole position; but the French general had protested *in toto* against the attack. Events prove General Grant perfectly right and General Montauban all wrong. Scarcely had we been in the first fort half an hour and thrown out skirmishers, etc., and begun to advance on Fort B, when *all* the forts hoisted *white flags*. I was sent to Fort B to ask if it had surrendered, and to my surprise was told by the officer commanding that *he had not*, but had merely followed the example of the big fort [D] on the other side. I then went to the big fort, which I reached with difficulty as I had to cross the river, and was told by the officer commanding there that he had *not* surrendered. This fellow was very impudent and said that the sooner we recommenced the fight the better.* *He* had hoisted white flags, he said, because the Viceroy had told him, but by way of truce only, and not as surrender. I told him

* Rumour said that Parkes boxed this gentleman's ears for his insolence.

that we should recommence at 2 P.M., and at one we moved out of Fort A, but when we reached Fort B, no resistance was made and we occupied it.

'Their allowing us to occupy this fort appeared most incomprehensible, so again I volunteered to cross to the south side of the river, find out the Viceroy, who we knew was somewhere in that direction, and settle the point as to whether fighting was at an end or not. You see it was no small point to decide this, as it was then 3 P.M. and we could have done nothing more that day in the way of *capturing* forts, and at the same time, if they had given in, it was important to *secure* the success in one and the same day. So, as I said, I volunteered to go on this service—not altogether an inviting one, because my experience of the morning showed that the men in the south fort were brutes, and might do uncomfortable things. Anson, one of the aides-de-camp, a fine fellow, came with me, and Loch of the Embassy begged me to take him instead of the sowar and he would carry the flag of truce, which consisted of the piece of white cotton cloth taken off my pith helmet. We got to the river, but couldn't get across. Eventually a shaky old boat turned up and tried to come to us; but by this time a gale had come on, accompanied with torrents of rain, and heaven's artillery opened as ours ceased. The boat could not reach us and was perceived by some French officers 200 yards down the bank, who seeing us going across the river thought we were proceeding to hoist the English flag, and tried to start themselves first for this purpose. By wading through the mud we managed to get to our boat, but they stuck to us, and, although it was wrong on their part, they accompanied us. We landed at the fort, found it hermetically sealed, and although by looking through the chinks we could see that it was full of men standing at their guns, they would not speak to or notice us. This was inconvenient, as we could not

get into the road behind the fort without passing the latter, and were on the point of returning, when we found a big plank which we placed over the fosse and thus succeeded in getting into the rear of the fort. *Then* an officer came rushing out to know what we wanted—the same one who had been insolent to me in the morning. I told him I was going to see the Viceroy, and would have nothing to say to him, with whom I had no business whatever, etc., and if he dared to stop a flag of truce he did it at his peril. Eventually he let me pass, and we trudged on a weary three miles through mud up to our knees to the town where the Viceroy was. I cannot tell you all that passed, as I should require hours for the purpose. The Viceroy used all sorts of tricks and evasions, but at last agreed to surrender the forts. I made him draw up a capitulation in writing, and started back to the fort through the same muddy road, but this time mounted on a pony. It was now pitch dark, and on nearing the fort we were challenged by the Chinese garrison, as I supposed. I answered in Chinese, and was challenged again, when Loch recognized the hail and answered in English. Another moment and 120 rifles would have been discharged at us.

'It appears that after we had passed this fort, the garrison evacuated it, and this being observed from the opposite side, a hundred and a few men were thrown across to take possession. It was dark when they got into the fort, and seeing us approach with half a dozen Chinese lanterns they thought we were Chinese and were going to act accordingly. To our distress we found that our friends on the other side had made no arrangements for our return, so after spending half an hour in the mud hailing them, we went into the fort, which was by no means a pleasant place, as the Chinese before quitting it had laid all sorts of trains and slow matches leading to guns, etc.,

one of which went off and took off the legs of two Frenchmen. As many of these matches and bedevillments as we could find were put out, but the fort was of immense extent, the night was pitch dark, and it was little that could be done to set things right. Very glad was I to get a biscuit from the officer of the party and to lie down in a hut for the night.

'The next morning got across the river, but I had to walk for three and a half hours before I could join General Grant. Our horses, like everybody else, had bolted during the evening, and we had to trudge on foot through mud. Hardly had I got home when I had to start off again to the Viceroy to notify acceptance of his terms and to take him to the forts to make delivery to the Generals. Employed on this service till past 8 P.M. Home again, and at ten Lord Elgin came in and said that the Admiral was anxious to see if he could not push up to Tien-tsin and wanted me to go with him. Ready at daylight for this duty, and at 7 heard from Admiral that he was ready. Joined him and started. We knew that several forts were in our way, but we did not know whether they would fight or not. At 7 P.M. we had got up to within ten miles of Tien-tsin, having passed nothing but empty forts. Some people came down to us from Tien-tsin and told us that the authorities entertained no idea of defending the very extensive defences that Sangkolin had thrown up. This determined the Admiral to push on the next morning to "occupy" Tien-tsin with his five gunboats—his whole available land force being eighty-seven men. With this we put parties into two forts and one of the gates of the city, called on the authorities and told them the city was ours, not theirs, and issued a Proclamation to the people. Admiral then left, to hurry up supports, leaving Captain M'Cleverty and myself in charge of the city. Fortunately, although there might have been many military fugitives from the Taku forts in the city, the people were evidently

very friendly, and before the evening I had succeeded in establishing a committee of supply who are ready to provide all the provisions we require.

‘Yesterday [25th] we were glad to find that a regiment had arrived. I spent eight hours in the saddle, riding everywhere and trying to find out everything. At night the General arrived, and this morning Lord Elgin. This forenoon, from 5 to 1, I was riding or knocking about. Since then I have [had] to write a report for Lord Elgin, and recopy it, and I had only done this an hour before he closed his dispatches. Then I wrote the note I sent you two and a half hours ago, and here I am scribbling by an expiring light, and very tired.

‘But I am very cheerful, and with good reason. Every one must feel thankful to have obtained in one day the whole of these formidable forts at so cheap a cost. We lost 201 men in killed and wounded, the French 140 odd, total about 350 men. The enemy must have lost 1200 or probably 1500. We marched out of Peh-tang on the 12th and we marched into Tien-tsin on the 25th, and I do not now expect to hear another gun fired. Imperial Commissioners are posting down from Peking, and with proper management on our part, Diplomacy, which will now come into play, will, we should hope, be as successful as the sword. By the next mail I trust I shall write you that we have seen the interior of Peking. . . .

‘I have never had so much knocking about in the same space of time. Seven or eight hours per diem of riding has been my usual allowance, but I am vastly improved in health with this rough work, as I have but comparatively little head work with it. The climate is really very fine: very hot in the middle of the day, but cold enough at night for a blanket. I wear blue flannel all day, and though much exposed to the sun, have not suffered from it at all. It is a very different sun to that of the south of China. Now we have reached

Tien-tsin we have lots of luxury—fine beef, particularly fine mutton, and fruit and vegetables that make one's mouth water,—grapes, peaches, pears, apples that (if we except the latter) we should consider very fine in England. This after living a good deal on meat and bread only is very delicious. I am very much pleased with what I have seen of the people and climate of this part of China. Both are incomparably superior to those of the South. The country is very flat, not a hill in sight, and therefore monotonous, but very green and fertile, and *no* paddy cultivation.'

The Imperial Commissioners arrived, and immediately (2nd September) signified their acceptance of Lord Elgin's terms. It was, however, a strictly mandarin acceptance, for when the draft of a Convention embodying these terms was submitted to them on the 6th by 'Mr Parkes, who,' the Ambassador observed, 'has exhibited in the conduct of these proceedings his usual zeal, ability, and tact,' they revealed the fact (or excuse) that they had no power to sign without a reference to the Emperor. Lord Elgin's reply to so patent a pretext for delay was to break off negotiations with Kweiliang and Hang-fuh, and request the General to march on Peking.

*'Yang-tsun, September 10.—*It is just fifteen days since I last wrote, but I have been exceedingly busy during that time. The first few days I was chiefly engaged in obtaining army supplies. Then, when the Imperial Commissioners arrived I had to go to work with them. Wade and myself have so divided the work that we have each our separate functions. We are called joint-secretaries, and he does most of the pen work, I the mouth and outdoor labour. It is a division that suits us both. *Interviews* with Commissioners devolve upon me, while *letters* to them are managed by him. Then the General also finds work for me to do

in reference to the varied wants of the army; and the applications for assistance in small matters from all sorts of people who naturally cannot make their wants known to the people are incessant. We have five junior interpreters with the force besides Wade and myself, but all of them have plenty to do, and two of them are already out of sorts. However, the work is doing me no harm. . . .

'At one time we thought matters were going on well, as the Convention that was to have been signed was agreed to by the Commissioners and ready for signature. At the eleventh hour we found (as usual to Chinese negotiators) that they had been deceiving us; and hence the determination to treat only under the walls of Peking. This determination was taken on Friday 7th, and on the 8th our first column of about 2000 men marched out of town and made a fair start yesterday. I accompanied this party, the place assigned me being in advance of everything, and I have *carte blanche* to call upon Commanding Officers for any escorts that I may require.

'My business on the march is to collect all the information and all the supplies I can, and during yesterday and to-day I was very successful in both regards. So also at Tien-tsin I established capital markets and kept the Commissariat in everything they required.'

He did more than assist the Commissariat: he provided for the transport. On the night after this letter was written the native drivers bolted with their animals. It looked as if the army would have to stop where it was: but Parkes arranged for transport by the river, and the march was resumed. His indefatigable energy and extraordinary influence over the Chinese throughout the campaign were amazing. Lord Elgin, who had taken time to appreciate him, wrote at last in terms of unqualified admiration: 'Parkes is one of the most

remarkable men I have ever met; for energy, courage, and ability combined, I do not know where I could find his match; and this, joined to a facility of speaking Chinese, which he shares only with Lay, makes him at present *the man of the situation.*' Sir Hope Grant, in a despatch to Mr Bruce of 17th November, stated that 'when the army advanced upon Tien-tsin, Mr Parkes discovered the contractors for the supply of the Chinese army and turned their means and services to the account of the British commissariat. . . . All these duties and many others Mr Parkes performed with the indefatigable energy and activity which characterize him.' And the Chaplain to the Forces, the Rev. R. J. L. M'Ghee, repeated the verdict of the mess-room in these words: 'There is no man in China so fit to deal with the Chinese as Mr Parkes. He sees through their double dealings (if any man can fathom their deceit) with an eagle glance; he is as plucky as a true British bulldog, and meets their treachery and falsehood by open, honest, straightforward boldness and determination. . . . Mr Parkes is thoroughly polite, but does not scruple, if he finds the highest official in the realm dealing falsely, to tell him so; hence the mingled hatred and fear which his name inspires in the minds of all the governing powers in the country. . . . I much wish that every one of our officials in China were of the same stamp; we should then have little more trouble with the country.*

* M'GHEE, *How we got to Pekin*, p. 121, 122 (1862).

CHAPTER XIII

A PRISONER IN PEKING

1860

A MONTH passed between the breaking off of the Tien-tsin conferences and the arrival of the allies in force before Peking, and in the meanwhile the negotiations which had been abandoned were resumed. At first the allies, determined apparently to 'stand no more nonsense,' pushed on their advance guard to Ho-si-wu, a place about half-way between Tien-tsin and the capital. On the way Lord Elgin received fresh overtures from the Chinese. Two new Commissioners had been appointed to conclude a Convention, one of whom was no less a personage than Tsai, Prince of I, a nephew of the Emperor and one of the three princes who practically governed the country, whilst the other was the President of the Board of War. These fresh diplomatists, armed with plenary powers from the Emperor, tried to induce Lord Elgin to return to Tien-tsin and resume the interrupted negotiations; but although he declined to go back he did what was almost as bad: he consented not to go forward. First he said that the army would march to Tung-chow (ten miles from Peking) 'crushing all opposition' on its way; and then he added that it would halt at a stage short of Tung-chow, whilst he and an escort of a

thousand men would enter the town to sign the Convention, and then go on to Peking to present the Queen's letter to the Emperor. The Chinese naturally drew the conclusion that one concession might be followed by others, and that the allies were not confident of their strength. The Prince of I took advantage of the pause to arrange a plot, as dishonourable and perfidious as even mandarin duplicity could devise. Whilst calling up the Mongolian troops and preparing a trap for our army, he sought to gain time by apparent conciliation. He and his colleague promised to sign the Convention which had already been submitted to their predecessors in the Commission. On the 16th September they had a long and amicable interview with the two secretaries, who brought back a formal letter in which the Commissioners engaged to execute the Convention of which they had approved the draft. They fixed a point about five miles from Tung-chow for the final camp of the allied army, beyond which no advance should be made. Parkes and Wade came back thoroughly satisfied, and completely deceived. 'The earnestness and even vehemence,' wrote Wade, 'with which the Prince had discussed, first the question of powers and lastly the position of the force, induced us both to believe that his surrender at last was *bonâ fide* for the purpose of preventing further hostilities.' To have imposed upon two such shrewd diplomatists is a sufficient proof of the exceptional ability of the Prince of I, whose career, however, was abruptly cut short just a year later by the silken cord, nominally on account of the treachery which he now perpetrated.

On the 17th September Parkes returned to Tung-chow to complete the arrangements for a meeting be-

tween the Commissioners and the allied Ambassadors, and among other things to mark out at what was known as 'the five *li* point' the ground for the camp. He was accompanied by Mr Loch, Lord Elgin's private secretary, Mr de Norman, attaché to Mr Bruce's Legation, Colonel Walker,* Quarter-master of the cavalry brigade, Mr Thomson, Deputy Commissary General, Mr Bowlby of the *Times*, and Lieutenant Anderson commanding the escort of Fane's Horse. On the way nothing unusual was remarked, and a Chinese lieutenant-general, whom they met, cordially congratulated them on 'the conclusion of peace.' They found quarters in a temple at Tung-chow, and Parkes spent seven hours with the Imperial Commissioners, arranging details. He found that they strongly objected to the proposal that Lord Elgin should personally present the Queen's letter to the Emperor—it appeared that a convenient law of the realm, invented for the occasion, compelled his Majesty to go to his hunting-lodge at that season,—but this detail was reserved for Lord Elgin's consideration. The other matters were settled; and the meeting ended in the exchange of apparently sincere congratulations on the conclusion of the preliminaries of peace. But the letter† which Parkes wrote to his wife when it was all over will best tell what followed these treacherous civilities:—

* Afterwards General Sir C. P. Beauchamp Walker, K.C.B.

† In relating the capture of Parkes and his party on 18th September, and the imprisonment which ensued, I rely upon his letter to his wife of 9th October, his official report to Lord Elgin, printed in the Blue-Book (*Parl. Papers*, 1861 [66], p. 226-244), and Sir H. B. Loch's vivid *Personal Narrative of Occurrences during Lord Elgin's Second Embassy to China*, p. 131-238 (Murray, 1869, reprinted 1900,) which, however, presents some slight discrepancies with Parkes's Report.

'At daylight on the 18th I went with said officers to the place of encampment (five miles from Tung-chow), and was surprised to find it occupied by a considerable force of Chinese troops, while other bodies could be seen approaching from other directions. Failing to get any explanation from the officers who commanded these troops, and fearing that our advanced column might come up at any moment, in which case a collision would have been inevitable, I despatched Loch (Lord Elgin's private secretary) to General Grant with the intelligence, begging him to halt his column, until I could bring him an explanation of this unexpected state of things. I then galloped back to Tung-chow, first, to look out for the Commissioners and see if they would immediately direct the withdrawal of these troops, and failing this, then secondly, to get my party out of the place as quickly as possible, that I might be on the right side of the hedge when the engagement began: said party consisted of about fifteen sowars (native cavalry), Mr de Norman of the Legation, Mr Bowlby (*Times* correspondent), and Lieutenant Anderson who commanded the escort.* On returning to Tung-chow I found all the gentlemen out; I despatched messengers in quest of them, warned the sowars to be ready to start at a moment's notice, and with a couple of them went in search of the Commissioners. It was a long time before I found them:—no one would tell me where they were. They told me that they would not withdraw the troops, and in such a tone that I soon saw that the sooner I withdrew myself from them the better, as they were surrounded by a host of men whose manner was very different to that of previous occasions. I made them give me, however, categorical replies † to two categorical

* Colonel Walker and Mr Thomson had left the party before now, and managed eventually at considerable risk to get through the Chinese lines.

† These replies were: (1) that the Imperial Commissioners, would *not* direct the troops to retire, because (2) the peace had *not* been determined on, in consequence of the audience question remaining still unsettled.

questions, which to prevent mistake I took down before them in writing, and then, wishing them a very good morning, hoped I had seen the last of them for a little time, as I could see a fight had been determined on.

'Got back to my party, who were three miles off, and had been rejoined by Loch* with an urgent message from the General desiring me to come out as soon as possible, as the enemy were on both his flanks and were threatening his baggage, thus rendering it difficult to delay engaging them. We had a good six miles to go, and the whole Chinese army (since estimated at many thousand men) between us and our people; but I relied upon our flag of truce carrying us through, if we could only get out before the battle began. We rode hard, and had only about half a mile more to go to place us in safety, when we got amongst the masses of the Chinese troops. Boom! boom! went a line of guns in their front, which showed that the action had commenced. We held on our way, but as soon as [we] were discovered, horsemen filed off to the right and left of us, and meeting in front, stopped our way. Riding ahead, I called on their officers to allow me and my flag of truce to pass out, but they refused to do this without the order of their General or some superior officer. As the latter did not appear, I with Loch and one sowar with white flag left the party, and rode to the spot where he was said to be. I then after passing through some [tall millet cane] found

When Parkes repeated that he could only refer this question to Lord Elgin, they said, 'You can do much more if you like. You can settle the point at once yourself; but you won't.' It is evident that the Commissioners looked upon Parkes as the chief voice in the negotiations and did not believe him when he asserted Lord Elgin's supreme power of decision.

* Loch had loyally ridden back through the Chinese lines in the hope of hastening the escape of Parkes and his party, and Captain Brabazon had volunteered to accompany him, when it was found that Lieutenant-Colonel Wolseley (whom the General named for the duty) was at some distance employed in his special work of surveying the country.

myself in the presence of a body of matchlock-men, who levelled their pieces and would have fired, had not an officer, who galloped up simultaneously, persuaded them to desist. In quicker time than it takes me to write, we were surrounded by them, and when I called out for the officer I wanted to see, I was pointed to a fat fellow on horseback some distance off on the other side of a creek, and told to dismount and cross over to him.

'I now saw that I must be prepared for foul play, but resistance with only three of us (two of us without swords) being useless, my only hope (and I confess it was a faint one) rested on my flag; and I dismounted and endeavoured to cross the creek to the said officer. While doing so, a greater man appeared, even Sang-kolinsin himself, the Chinese Commander-in-Chief; and as he had sent in flags of truce to us on various occasions, I hoped that he would respect mine, and for a moment I felt it was well to be taken before a man of such high rank. But the illusion was soon dispelled, for as I approached I was seized by his attendants and hurled down before him, because I had not instantly obeyed their order to kneel. Loch and the sowar (a Sikh) as they were brought up were treated in the same way.'

'The moment the Prince gave me an opportunity of speaking to him, which he did by asking me my name, I at once clearly informed him who I was, and of the whole character of my mission to Tung-chow, adding that I was returning to my Ambassador when I was stopped by his troops. I was proceeding with a remonstrance against the treatment I was receiving, when the Prince interrupted me by saying—

"Why did you not agree yesterday to settle the Audience question?"

"Because I was not empowered to do so," I replied.

'The Prince then continued in a very forbidding tone—

“Listen! You can talk reason: you have gained two victories to our one. Twice you have dared to take the Peiho forts; why does not that content you? And now you presume to give out* that you will attack any force that stops your march on Tung-chow. I am now doing that. You say that you do not direct these military movements; but I know your name, and that you instigate all the evils that your people commit. You have also used bold language in the presence of the Prince of I, and it is time that foreigners should be taught respect for Chinese nobles and ministers.”

I endeavoured to explain the mistakes of the Prince; told him distinctly what my functions were; that I had come to Tung-chow by express agreement with the Imperial Commissioners, and solely in the interests of peace; and I again begged him to show the same respect to an English flag of truce that we had always paid to those so repeatedly sent in by the Chinese. The Prince, however, simply laughed at all this, and, going to a house that was close by, directed the soldiers to bring me after him. On arriving at the house I was again thrown on my knees before him, and the Prince said—

“Write to your people and tell them to stop the attack.”

“It would be useless for me to do so,” I replied, “as I cannot control or influence military movements in any way. I will not deceive your Highness by leading you to suppose that anything I might write would have such an effect.”

“I see you continue obstinate,” he said, “and that you will be of no use to me.”

His suite came round and joined in taunting me, and made remarks which indicated very plainly the treachery they had practised, and their own exultation

* Referring to the proclamation of the Commander-in-Chief.

at finding that our army had fallen (as they thought) into their snare. In a few minutes the three of us were put into a cart with two Frenchmen (who turned up as prisoners also at the same moment) and sent away to the Prince of I. . . . Until you have tried it, you can form no idea of the pain and anguish of this conveyance when it goes along a paved road. The Prince of I could not be found, so we were taken to another notable, and again hurled on our knees. Feigning faintness [to avoid useless questions] I was removed into the air, and the three of us were surrounded as before by a throng of brutal and excited soldiery, taken thence to a house, searched, then brought before another mandarin, an officer on the Prince of I's suite, again made to kneel and again examined [buffeted, and kicked]. While the examination was going on, he suddenly rose and went out, and immediately afterwards a number of soldiers with drawn swords rushed in, bound us, and carried us away, as I really feared, to execution.* I cannot stay to dwell on these moments of horror, although prayer came to my relief. But instead of being murdered, we were again (all five) put into a cart and started off, as we soon found, to Peking. I could now see that the camp to which we had been brought was being broken up, and was in full retreat, in consequence doubtless of our having gained some advantage in the engagement. The soldiers however were savage in consequence of their defeat, and called out that they would revenge the deaths of their comrades on us. The journey [which lasted five hours] gave us dreadful suffering.'

'The road was so much blocked up by men and vehicles retreating, whilst others were advancing, that we were often obliged to halt. The Prince of I, Muhyin his fellow Commissioner, and Hang-ki passed us in

* They were run out of the house in the way that Chinese prisoners are hurried out to execution. 'We said a few sad parting words to each other, for we now considered our deaths as certain.' (LOCH, p. 164).

large sedan chairs, but would not deign to notice us. We could see that we were in the charge of Tsing Tajin, the officer . . . on the suite of the Prince of I, and our first solicitations of relief from pain and thirst afforded him so much cruel gratification that we made no second appeal to his humanity. Fortunately one of the four soldiers in the cart with us was less relentless and gave us a little water.'

'It was sunset before we reached the east gate of Peking, and 8 P.M. before our cart halted in a court of which it was then too dark to see anything. Lanterns were produced and again I shuddered, as I found that we were in the hands of the Board of Punishments, who may be classed with the officers of the Bastille or the Inquisition of Spain. Soon we were loaded with chains and carried before these inquisitors, who after a short examination ordered us to imprisonment in the common prisons, each prisoner to be confined in a separate prison, but among sixty or seventy of their own wretched felons.'

As he clanked along the courts and passages on his way to the prison, he heard the sound of other chains, which told him that Loch was passing: but his ruffianly gaolers would not let the two prisoners converse, and with a last 'God bless you,' they were hurried off in different directions. To each it seemed as if this silent farewell might be the last. 'Poor Parkes,' wrote Loch, 'suffered much in mind and body, and yet maintained outwardly an appearance of calm indifference to all that could be done to him': but the old Sikh was the least perturbed of the three. When Loch bade him keep up his spirits and fear not, Nal Singh answered with the stoical courage of his race: 'Fear! I do not fear. If I do not die to-day, I may to-morrow, and I am past sixty; and am I not with you? I do not fear.' So the three parted, and the next thing Parkes

saw was a massive door, which opened and closed on him, and he found himself in the common gaol. 'It was like entering a pandemonium.' Some seventy wild-looking felons, foul and diseased, crowded round to gaze upon him, and he was fastened to a beam overhead by a long heavy chain, to which his neck and hands and feet were linked by an iron collar, handcuffs, and fetters. To his great relief the cords were taken off his wrists, which had been bound so tightly that his hands had swollen to twice their natural size. His chains were long enough to allow him to lie down, and such was his weariness and hunger (for he had not tasted food for more than twenty-four hours) that, in spite of the horror of his situation, the exhausted man fell sound asleep on the bare planking which formed the common bed of all the prisoners. But he was not long suffered to taste forgetfulness, for at midnight he was again dragged before the Board of Inquisitors, and subjected to a long and severe examination, in which the argument of threats and the indignities of the torturers were used without scruple. Four men gripped him, and, on a sign from the examiners, repeatedly twitched his ears and hair as he knelt on the stone floor. A great many questions were put to him as to the strength of the British army, the military resources of India, and the like, to which Parkes gave straightforward answers; and the inquisitors waxed very wroth when he referred to the Queen by a term which also applied to the Emperor of China.

'What do you mean by using such language?' they said. 'You have yourself shown that you have been long in China, that you can speak our language and

read our books ; and you must know, therefore, that there is but one Emperor, who rules over all lands.'

Parkes tried vainly to make them understand his position as non-combatant ; they only replied by asking why he was always in the front of the army, and refused altogether to listen to his reasoning that, whatever his offence, it was not one which could properly land him in the common gaol, as if he were a Chinese criminal. To that den he was accordingly sent back, where his name was stuck up as a 'rebel.' There many high mandarins, and even the President of the Board of Punishments, came and scoffed at him, while he protested against their treatment and warned them of the inevitable consequences. Only the prisoners showed him fellow-feeling, and even from thieves and homicides it was a balm to his misery :—

' Many of these unfortunate men were glad, when so permitted, to come round me and listen to my story, or any description that I would give them of foreign countries. . . . They were seldom disrespectful, addressed me by my title, and often avoided putting me to inconvenience when it was in their power to do so. Most of them were men of the lowest class, and the gravest order of offenders—as murderers, burglars, etc. Those who had no means of their own were reduced by prison filth and prison diet to a shocking state of emaciation and disease ; but those who could afford to fee the gaolers, and purchase such things as they wanted, lived in comparative fulness and comfort.'

After four days of the common gaol, he was removed on 22nd September to a separate room, eight feet square, which he shared with his four special gaolers. The cause of this slight improvement was probably the supercession of the Imperial Commissioners by the Prince of Kung, a brother of the Emperor. The

food, baths, and all needful comforts. Here many more conferences took place with Hang-ki and other officials, and Parkes consented to write to Lord Elgin that he was now being well treated and that he hoped hostilities would be suspended in favour of negotiations —to which Loch added a postscript in Hindustani to warn the Ambassador that the letter was written by order of the Chinese. Again and again the mandarins tried to extort a pledge from Parkes on the subject of the terms of peace: they could not shake his determination to do nothing that could bind or hamper Lord Elgin.*

Among the thrilling incidents of these days of anxious expectation was the discovery, in a package of clothes sent by their friends at the camp, of a worked handkerchief and embroidered dress shirt: such strange articles for two prisoners aroused Loch's suspicions, and he discovered a sentence in Hindustani, almost invisibly worked round in the embroidery, announcing that the bombardment would begin on the third day and asking for the exact position of their place of captivity. One may conceive how the hopes and fears of the prisoners rose and fell as they read: how the zeal of their friends was weighed against the risk of instant death on the sound of the first gun: 'that shot, said Hang-ki, 'will be the signal for your execution.' It was made very clear to them that British bombs would be answered by prisoners' heads. On the 3rd October a letter from Wade was brought in, in

* Lord Elgin fully appreciated this public spirit. 'Mr Parkes's consistent refusal,' he wrote, 'to purchase his own safety by making any pledges, or even by addressing to me any representations which might have embarrassed me in the discharge of my duty, is a rare example of courage and devotion to the public interest.'

which he assured Parkes that if any harm befell the prisoners Peking would be 'burnt from one end to the other'—a posthumous consolation which did not greatly raise their spirits. The thought of the misery that would ensue was more painful to Parkes even than their own position. If the Chinese believed that the threat would be carried out, it might save their lives : but would they believe?

The one hope lay in Hang-ki, who had discovered that the English had 'a curious habit of speaking the truth.' If he could convince the Prince of Kung of the genuineness of the threat, all might yet be well, and for his own sake he would endeavour to save the destruction of his house and possessions. At first Hang-ki failed to bring the Council of State over to his view, and on the 5th he told the prisoners that they were to be executed that evening. They wrote their farewell letters and felt almost glad that the suspense was over. Then an order came to reprieve them till the morrow, and in the morning Hang-ki arrived with an altered countenance and told them that he had been up all night with the Prince of Kung, who had finally agreed to accept Lord Elgin's terms.

Then at the last moment a new event brought back the old peril. The sound of heavy guns was heard on the morning of the 7th. Had the bombardment begun? The Chinese were in great alarm, and eyed the prisoners in a manner that boded no good. Their danger was now from the populace, not from the Government; but Parkes held to his argument, that the Chinese had brought it all upon themselves by procrastination, and that the only chance of peace lay in the immediate surrender of all the prisoners. The

argument went home, supported by the sound of the guns (though they were not shotted) and the fact that the allies had seized the Summer Palace and all but captured the Empress and the Prince of Kung, who left the palace on one side as the troops entered on the other. Hang-ki went away in search of the Prince, and the prisoners anxiously awaited the morrow.

The events of the 8th October may be told in the graphic words of Loch's *Narrative* :—

*'Monday 8th.—At daylight we sent to inquire at his house if Hang-ki had yet returned ; we received a message that he had come back about four o'clock this morning, much exhausted, but would call about nine. Shortly after that hour he came ; he said he had succeeded in seeing Prince Kung and also Wade ; that the latter had said the surrender of one of the gates into the hands of the allies was a condition the Allied Commanders-in-Chief insisted upon, before they would stay further military operations. This, Hang-ki said, was a demand which could not be complied with ; then, dismissing the subject, he changed the conversation, and began to discuss a dozen indifferent subjects, amongst others, whether the earth revolved round the sun or *vice versa*. He had been joined by a good number of mandarins ; all of them quietly drank their tea and joined in the conversation,—Parkes maintaining his share in it with as much calmness as if our lives and probably the future fate of China were not hanging on each moment of valuable time thus slipping away. Not even having the excitement of knowing what was passing, except when Parkes from time to time told me, and yet to appear utterly indifferent, was a great trial of both nerves and temper. About noon a mandarin called, who had a long whispered conversation with Hang-ki. Hang-ki then returned to his seat, and after quietly drinking a cup of tea, said to Parkes that Prince Kung had decided upon releasing*

us at once, and that we should be sent about two o'clock that afternoon into the allied camp. Parkes merely bowed in answer, and when he told me, said, "Don't exhibit any pleasure or feeling." I suggested that as the discussion about the sun and earth must be by this time nearly exhausted, he should ask their opinion as to whether the moon rotates on her own axis, which I believed was a doubtful point in Europe. Without saying one word respecting our release, Parkes quietly began on this subject and continued until Hang-ki's patience was exhausted, when he exclaimed, "You appear to be alike indifferent as to whether you are to die or live." Parkes replied, "Not at all; but we have now had considerable experience of the vacillation and the deceit of the Chinese Government, and therefore until our release becomes an accomplished fact, we venture to doubt it." Hang-ki had now risen and was walking up and down the room; he suddenly went up to Parkes, and leaning forward, whispered in his ear, "There are many difficulties to be overcome; you cannot leave before two o'clock, but you cannot be more anxious to hurry forward the arrangements than I am. If we ever meet after to-day, remind me, and I will tell you my reasons."

'We were told that six other prisoners would be released at the same time, but we could not ascertain who they were. Our servants now busied themselves and packed up our few possessions, and Hang-ki presented a cloth cloak to each of us. We waited anxiously for two o'clock;—it came at last. Hang-ki, who for the previous hour had been passing backwards and forwards, then came and led us by the hand into an outer court, where we found three or four covered carts—the curtains round them were closed, and prevented our seeing who were inside. Parkes and I got into the one prepared for us; the curtain was then drawn, and we were told to be careful not to show ourselves. Some little time was occupied, apparently

in forming the escort: when all was in readiness, the gate leading into the street was thrown open. A dense crowd had assembled outside: the escort cleared a way for the carts, and men went in front with whips to keep the people back. It is impossible to describe our feelings—our hopes were raised—and yet we felt how much still lay between us and safety. . . . It seemed as if we should never reach the gate; at last we had a good view of the heavy massive doors, which, with a sinking feeling, we saw were closed, but when within thirty yards they were thrown open, and we heard the heavy bang of their being shut behind us with a sensation of intense relief. The outer gate was opened, and closed, in the same manner, and we found ourselves once more outside the walls of Peking and in the open country.'

'Oh the delight [wrote Parkes] at finding ourselves really being taken away from the horrible place, at passing out of the tall dark gate of the city, and being able again to look around. Directly we sighted the first English sentry we could not be longer restrained, and (not being bound) we jumped from the cart and made for the red coats.'

Later, when Hang-ki explained his mysterious whisper, Parkes learned how narrow had been the escape. It appeared that the war-party had persuaded the Emperor at Jehol to issue the order for the immediate execution of the prisoners, and Hang-ki's spy at Court in the very nick of time sent him the tidings that the order was on its way. The mandarin succeeded in getting the captives out of Peking by order of the Prince of Kung barely a quarter of an hour before the Emperor's messenger arrived. Had there been fifteen minutes' delay, nothing could have saved them.

Parkes and Loch were safe; so was the brave old

Sikh who accompanied them ; but the other prisoners' fate was still uncertain, and the allies demanded the surrender of one of the city gates of Peking as a guarantee for the observance of good faith. The surrender was negotiated by Parkes himself, who went into Peking, not bound in a cart this time, but riding beside Sir Robert Napier :—

*'Camp, Peking, October 14.—I am rejoiced to have the means of telling you that the Chinese yesterday surrendered one of the gates of the city to us, and thus we may conclude that we have seen the end of hostilities. Had they not made this surrender, our batteries would have opened at twelve o'clock upon the city, so that a very great weight is now taken off our minds ; for although, humanly speaking, we could have taken the huge place without great difficulty, still we should have destroyed at the same time the government of the country and would have been left without people to treat with. It is even now difficult to say what course negotiations will take, for since I wrote you on the evening of the 9th we have received very sad information as to the fate of the rest of the prisoners. Eight Sikhs of the escort that took me into Tung-chow were given up yesterday, and one Frenchman ; two more Sikhs came in to-day ; and yesterday we were told by the Chinese authorities that these were all the prisoners that remained alive. The statement still requires confirmation, but we fear it may prove to be true. If so, then out of my party of nineteen Sikhs, one dragoon, and six gentlemen,—viz. Major Brabazon, Lieutenant Anderson, De Norman (of the Legation), Bowlby (*Times* correspondent), Loch, and myself,—the two last and nine Sikhs alone survive. Fifteen dead and eleven only saved ! What a miraculous preservation I have had, and how grateful I ought to be to the great God who hears and answers prayer for having so mercifully spared me to you. . . .*

‘October 14.—The fate of our other poor countrymen causes one common feeling of horror throughout the army. They were foully murdered. Tied hands and feet together, they were exposed in that state in an open court for three days and nights, very little food and water given to them, but blows in abundance. Delirium set in in some cases; the ropes cut into their flesh and mortification ensued—but I cannot go on with the description. We are certain of the deaths of Lieutenant Anderson and De Norman, two noble fellows, especially the latter, who had become well known to me. He is the only son of his mother, the Baroness de Norman. Anderson had greatly signalized himself in the Indian campaigns. Particulars of Major Brabazon’s and Mr. Bowlby’s fate are still unknown to us: indeed we have not yet been distinctly told that they are dead, but we fear this must be the case. We are to have the bodies of every one surrendered. The French lose three officers, several men, and poor Abbé de Luc.’

Then followed the punishment. To make the Emperor and Government feel it in the most sensitive quarter, Lord Elgin ordered the burning of part of the Summer Palace. It was given to the flames on the 18th and 19th October. ‘The clouds of smoke, driven by the wind, hung like a vast pall over Peking.’ From an artistic point of view it was an act of vandalism: * from that of sound policy it was statesmanlike.

* The French, however, had looted or destroyed almost everything of value in it, and had already set fire to the Emperor’s private apartments; so there was less vandalism than is often imagined. Most of the relics of the Imperial treasures which found their way to England were bought from French soldiers. Our men were not allowed to loot, and the little that some officers took was given up to the prize fund. There are excellent accounts of Yuen Ming Yuen before the burning, and of the looting that went on under General Montauban’s eyes, in Lord WOLSELEY’s *Narrative* (1862), R. SWINHOE’s *North China Campaign* (1861), and Rev. R. J. L. M’GHEE’s *How we got to Pekin* (1861).

From the 'British Embassy, Peking,' Parkes wrote to his wife, October 27:—

'We have passed since I last wrote you on the 14th from a state of war to a state of peace, and have signed our Convention, exchanged the ratifications of the Treaty of 1858, and our people are now walking about Peking in small parties of threes and fours very much in the way that we do at Canton. . . .

'On the 13th, as I told you, a gate of the city was placed in our hands, which gave us of course a great command over the place and would have terminated hostilities had it not been that the treatment of our prisoners was too atrocious to be passed [over] without exemplary punishment. But the difficulty was to know what punishment to inflict. Some advocated a heavy indemnity; others the burning of Peking; others the destruction of the Imperial Palace in the city. I think Lord Elgin came to the right decision in determining to raze to the ground all the palaces of Yuen Ming Yuen, the Emperor's Summer Palace, five miles outside Peking, where the Emperor and whole Court have lately spent two-thirds of their time, and where our poor countrymen were taken in the first instance and put to torture by direction of the Court itself. The allied troops had already plundered these palaces, or several of them, and some said that it was an ignoble sort of revenge on that account; but there appeared to be no other choice than the destruction of the palace within the city (which had not been looted), and considering that Yuen Ming Yuen was the scene of the atrocities committed on our countrymen, I consider that it was the proper one of the two to make a monumental ruin of. To have burnt Peking would have been simply wicked, as the *people* of the city, who would in that case be the sufferers, had done us no harm. At Yuen Ming Yuen we could only injure the Court.'

The last scene in the drama took place on October 27th. The Embassy took up its quarters in the palace of the Prince of I—the author of the treachery—and the representative of the Queen was at last within the walls of Peking. The long struggle of twenty years had ended in victory. Half measures had been tried, and failed, and tried again. At length the only step that could decide the issue for ever was taken, and what ought to have been done in 1842, what was obtained and then abandoned in 1858, had finally, after a treacherous tragedy, been accomplished. And the man who had stood by whilst the Treaty of Nanking was signed eighteen years before, who had stood in the front rank of the contest ever since, took his part in the crowning act.

CHAPTER XIV

THE OPENING OF THE RIVER PORTS

1860-1861

A BRITISH Embassy was at last established at Peking, and Parkes was enjoying the comforts of Lord Elgin's well-appointed household and excellent French cook with the keener relish from the memory of a very different experience as a prisoner in the same city. The residence at Peking, however, was to be but brief, for the present. Preparations would have to be made for the suitable housing of the new Minister and his establishment, and it was thought undesirable to emphasize our triumph by keeping our representative conspicuously before the eyes of the hostile faction at the capital. It was also apparently considered unnecessary to insist on an audience of the Emperor to deliver the Queen's autograph letter, and for the second time Lord Elgin left the neighbourhood of Peking without being received as every ambassador ought to be by the Sovereign to whom he is accredited. All succeeding Ministers to China have suffered for his mistake, and the audience question is still on an unsatisfactory footing.

But haste was as much the order of the day in November as delay had been the rule at the end of September. The General was in a hurry to remove

his troops. Indeed he 'wanted to be off the moment the Treaty was signed: to have done so,' as Parkes wrote (28th October), 'would have been to have made that Treaty * almost valueless, to have removed with one's own hand the impression we have been labouring so hard to make—in short to defeat the object of the Expedition.' Even Lord Elgin agreed in this view, and 'a great fight' ensued between him and Hope Grant. The General positively stated that 'he would not stay a day after the 7th November, fearing if he did so that the Tien-tsin river would freeze and prevent the embarkation of the army.' Eventually the whole British force, Legation and all, turned out of Peking on 9th November, followed by Parkes a few hours later. 'I was therefore,' he wrote, 'the last man to leave Peking, as I had been the first to enter it, and it was with no ordinary feelings that I passed under the same portals on going away as I had entered by, when brought in with Loch, bound in a cart, on the memorable 18th of September.'

Parkes acted as interpreter at the formal introduction of Mr Bruce to the Prince of Kung on the 8th November, when Lord Elgin resigned the seat of honour to his brother in token that henceforward the Representative of the Queen at Peking would take precedence of all her other subjects; and on the 9th

* The terms of the Treaty of Tien-tsin and the Convention of Peking may be read in Mr BOULGER's *History of China*, iii. Appendix. The chief new principles secured (besides the opening of new ports for trade) were the residence of a diplomatic agent at Peking, the recognition of the Christian religion, and the permission for travellers to visit all parts of China if provided with consular passports. In the new tariff, opium was legalized and taxed, instead of being, as before, openly smuggled with the connivance of the Chinese Government.

he followed the Ambassador on his journey to the coast. From Tien-tsin, where 5000 English and French troops were left in occupation, he rode alone to the Taku forts on the 26th, thirty-five miles over snow, and slept on the Admiral's ship, the *Coromandel*, which was surrounded by floes of ice ; and on the 28th he sailed for Shanghai, where he spent a month with Lord Elgin, who expressed a wish for his assistance during the concluding arrangements which he was making with regard to the opening of the Yang-tsze Kiang to commerce. The intercourse between the two was more friendly than it had ever been before. 'Lord Elgin makes himself very pleasant,' he wrote, 'and so does each one of his party.' The Ambassador was gradually unbending towards the 'sinologues,' as he called the interpreters, and his admiration of Parkes's abilities was now quickened by a genuine esteem for his character.

Their relations were soon to be ended, however. They left Shanghai on 4th January 1861, and after a short stay at Hongkong and Canton, during which Lord Elgin was pleased to see the progress that had been made in recovering the Shameen site for the factories (which he had himself chosen in opposition to the wishes of the merchants), and after formally proclaiming the annexation of the peninsula of Kowloon to the Crown of England in accordance with a provision in the new Treaty, the Ambassador with unfeigned relief departed for home. Parkes never met his Excellency again ; but he encountered his old ship the *Ferooz* in the Red Sea in 1862, when she was bearing Lord Elgin out to his Viceroyalty of India ; and, strangely enough, two years later he met the same

to recognize any government that might exist in China, rightly or wrongly, and there was a very general impression, justified in some degree by the history of previous rebellions, that the Tai Ping might very probably become the masters of China. Some of the missionaries were led to believe that the success of the Tai Ping religion, in which at first they discovered Christian elements, would be synonymous with a vast extension of the true faith ; and they brought all the pressure they could to bear upon the British authorities to give the rebels a fair chance. But the proceedings of their pseudo-Christian allies at the Treaty ports at length opened their eyes to the true character of the rebellion—which turned out to be nothing better than a general riot of unmitigated ruffians and brigands. Amoy felt the effects of the insurrection in 1853, when a revolution was suppressed with excessive cruelty by the Imperial forces. The foreign community at Shanghai had already prepared to defend itself. Consul Alcock had organized a scheme of defence and a volunteer force was enrolled. When the rebels seized the city in September 1853, the foreign settlement was placed in a state of siege, and though an attack by the French, who forgot their neutrality, ended in disaster, the steady defence of the foreign quarter was successful, and the rebels abandoned Shanghai in confusion. At Canton they were still less fortunate. They captured Fatshan, but on approaching Canton itself they soon discovered that the inhabitants were able to protect themselves, even without the aid which Commissioner Yeh begged of Sir John Bowring, and by the beginning of 1855 the Tai Ping had ceased to threaten the southern provincial capital.

They had, however, succeeded in spreading anarchy and bloodshed over a large part of China, and crushing under a reign of terror the fertile valley of the Yang-tsze with its teeming population. In 1858 and 1859 they held their own in this central region, mainly in consequence of the energy and ability of their general, Chung Wang, the 'Faithful King,' who held the Imperial armies in check and kept the control of the Yang-tsze from Nanking to Ichang—without, however, continuously occupying the towns. More than once Nanking was in vain besieged by the Emperor's troops: the skill and courage of the 'Faithful King' preserved it. In 1860 the successes of this distinguished commander, who had now taken Soochow, so alarmed the Imperial authorities that they actually sought the military aid of the very 'foreign devils' who were about to invade Peking. It apparently did not strike the Chinese as incongruous that the allies should help them at Soochow on their way to attacking them at the Peiho. The French were anxious to join in the scrimmage, but Mr Bruce resolutely maintained the attitude of neutrality prescribed by his Government, and the foreign forces at Shanghai were not permitted to march against the Tai Ping. The merchants were not, however, bound by the policy of their Government, and in despair at the loss of trade occasioned by the rebellion, they subsidized in 1860 a foreign legion, paid two American filibusters, by name Ward and Burgevine, to command it, and sent this motley force against the disturbers of their commerce. Ward, a man of much energy and courage, was signally successful for a time, but eventually was forced to retreat. The 'Faithful King' followed him to Shanghai, in order to crush the

foreign legion at its head, but his attack was valiantly beaten off by the defenders. The Imperial troops began once more to take heart, though the 'Faithful King' was meditating new and extensive campaigns with four distinct armies, at the time when Parkes ascended the Yang-tsze in February 1861.

The narrative of this memorable expedition—the complement of the earlier West River expedition, but far more important in its commercial results—is told in his letters to his wife and official reports.* The party of explorers was eminently representative. Besides the naval officers, it included Colonel (now Viscount) Wolseley, Mr Hughes the new Vice-Consul at Kiukiang (afterwards Consul-General at Shanghai), Mr Muirhead the missionary, Mr Michie, of Lindsay & Co. at Shanghai, some American missionaries, two French travellers, and Colonel Sarel's party, whose travels are described in Captain Blakiston's *Five months on the Yang-tsze*. When Parkes joined Admiral Hope's tender, the *Coromandel*, the only vessel that had managed to pass the numerous shoals and sandbanks, he found that the rebels had so far proved tractable. Sir James Hope had pushed on in his little ship to Nanking in order to test their intentions:—

'As the steamer slowly approached the landing-place, in bright sunshine and a still atmosphere,' writes one of the passengers,† 'the batteries on the river front were crowded, but remained silent. "What will you do, sir, if they fire?" the admiral was asked. "Oh, I will just drop down out of range, and send and ask them what

* See the *Life of Sir Harry Parkes*, vol. i. pp. 414-436 for further details.

† A. MICHIE, *Englishman in China*, vol. i. p. 371.

they mean by it," he replied, with deep deliberate utterance, not unlike Beaconsfield's.'

They did not fire, and communications were opened with the satisfactory result that the rebels seemed well-disposed and even friendly. The Admiral then steamed down the river to bring up some of the grounded vessels, whilst Parkes stayed at Chinkiang, to 'install a youngster in the charge of this Consulate which we established there and then.'

'It was at one time a noble city—as Chinese cities go—being at the entrance to the Grand Canal and a sort of half-way house between the southern and northern Provinces,—but during the time the rebels held it—from 1853 to end of 1857—they reduced it to a heap of ruins, and indeed evacuated it only because there was nothing to hold and because it had ceased to be of use to them. It was not an easy matter to find a shelter even for young Phillips, and we had to get some "braves" to turn out of a temple used as a military station on the top of a hill which was almost the only roofed tenement left near the waterside. We would not have used such a place for a stable in England—as a cowhouse it might have been utilized, but for no other purpose in our land of comfort and peaceful hearths. Men were set to scrub and clean and carpenters to knock up a few planks and provide windows—a flag-staff was put up and a Jack hoisted under a salute [22nd February]. Other accommodation was then hunted for and bespoken in the event of Sinclair coming up and wanting shelter likewise, and with a view to more permanent arrangements I selected a site suitable for locating the foreign community and Consulate, and large enough to provide a dozen good building lots, and secured this to the Queen under a lease, and she can sublet it to her loyal subjects when they want it. . . .

‘Nothing can be more sad than the appearance of Chinkiang. Its population when I saw it last in 1848 must at least have been 500,000; now probably it does not contain more than 5000 or at most 10,000, independent of the troops who number about 15,000 more. The troops or “braves” are the lowest class of ruffians, and the people little else but followers to the troops—or idlers and beggars, so that the demoralized state in which the place is cannot well be worse. And this is only one of the *hundreds* of cities that have been reduced by this rebellion to a similar condition. It is now absolutely without commerce of any description; the only lay residents consisting of a few small shopkeepers who gather round the military and drive a small trade by supplying their wants.’

On arriving at Nanking on March 25th, he found that it presented ‘a deplorable sight’:

‘The city walls are no less than *eighteen miles* in circumference, so you may imagine what an immense area they enclose—more than three times the size of the Canton enclosure. For many years past, however, even before the rebels came to the place, not a fifth part of this large area was built over, and now I may say that not a fifth of the most recently habitable portion is occupied with houses—the rest is either waste or taken up with rude cultivation, and as several hills are contained within the walls, you might take long walks almost without knowing that you are in a city. Such houses as are left are tenanted by the insurgent soldiery—for mistrusting the people and being wholly unable to govern a large population, they get rid of the difficulty by getting rid of the people, and not a single shop, with the sole exception of a few druggists, is allowed within the walls. Everything therefore looks dreary and poverty-stricken, and for one inhabited street you see ten that have fallen into ruins and are now nothing but mounds of tiles and bricks.

'The absence of population was partly accounted for by the statement that they had lately sent out several armies, and the large proportion of women to men would seem to confirm this statement. The women indeed cannot fail to strike the attention of the visitor—they were so numerous, so well dressed, and so good-looking. They are the spoil, I fear, of the country—nay, of provinces around—and once brought into Nanking they cannot return again. They evidently imitate Sisera and his host in the way in which when on their incursions they appropriate "to every man a damsel or two and a prey of divers colours"; for not only are the women in all the colours of the rainbow, but the men also. Generally speaking the Chinese dress in good taste, and the men in quiet sober colours, but these insurgents take delight in the most flaring habiliments, and scarlets, blues, and yellows are worn by their men as well as by the women. They look exactly like what they are—a pack of robbers who have just looted a city.'

The Admiral came up on the 31st with a small squadron:—

'After hearing my report he decided to make a communication to the rebel chiefs telling them in decided terms how we expected them to behave, and then pass on up the river. I put this communication into Chinese, and on the following day accompanied Captain Aplin, the Senior Naval Officer after the Admiral, into the city to see two of their "princes" and deliver the Admiral's message. It told them in plain terms that we had acquired the right of navigating the Yang-tsze and that they must not interfere with our merchant ships in the enjoyment of this right;—that a ship of war would be stationed at Nanking to protect British interests and see that our people behaved themselves;—and informed the rebels that if they attacked Hankow, Chinkiang, or any of

the new ports of the river, they must not molest British subjects or their property.

‘Our interview with the princes was interesting and amusing. Being common men,—Canton coolies, in short,—they did not know how to receive the foreign officials, and were not a little embarrassed by their own attempts at a State ceremony, which commenced by keeping us waiting outside their gate for twenty minutes, and then ushering us through lines of soldiery armed with drawn falchions and other horrible and barbarous weapons, all which of course had been got up for effect and in the hope of awing us into behaviour that would have suited their pretensions. Of course we had to commence by removing them from this high perch, wringing their insufferable conceit out of them, and bringing them down from the skies (for these “princes” are all following in the wake of their leader who claims affinity with Heaven itself) to an intelligible mundane position. And certainly they came down low enough before the interview was over, and made amends for keeping us in the mob outside the door when we first arrived by attending us to the same door at our departure and putting us upon their own ponies and sending us down to our boat respectfully attended, with all sorts of protestations of friendship, and assurances that if we came again we should be received properly.

‘When we had got them into this frame of mind (and there were only four of us who did it, Captain Aplin, myself, and two of his men), we found these “princes,” of whom we saw two, reasonable enough, and if they will keep their hands off our ships as they pass up and down, our principal object will be attained. We would prefer that our people should not have intercourse with them, but this cannot be prevented unless we turn ourselves into policemen and preventive officers; for the insurgents are most anxious to buy opium and arms and ammunition

from the foreigners, and where purchasers of these baneful articles are, there surely will sellers of them be found also. However, it is the fault of the Chinese customs if arms do reach the insurgents' hands, as our regulations for the river trade require all vessels to clear from Shanghai, and to be again examined at Chinkiang before they pass into rebel territory. It is the same, however, on the side of the Imperialists; opium and arms, opium and arms, is the one cry we hear from mandarins, soldiers, and people, at every place we have yet come to, and the satisfaction we feel in opening up this grand river to foreign commerce is not inconsiderably lessened by the reflection that much harm as well as good may result from the intercourse. . . . That much good may be effected I have no doubt, for when we go we shall give increased employment and security to this fair land,—or a land that once was fair but is now laid waste for the want of these advantages.'

A characteristic anecdote is related of Parkes's interview with the rebel 'princes.' When Admiral Hope submitted his proposal of stationing a gunboat to protect the river factories, the matter was referred to the decision of the 'Heavenly King,' who affected to rule by direct communication with the Almighty. Parkes and a deputation waited on the 'princes' to receive this inspired decision, and were informed that the king had seen a vision which forbade his sanctioning the presence of a foreign ship near Nanking. This was embarrassing, as the expedition was in a hurry to go on, and the matter had to be decided off-hand. Parkes settled it with his usual promptness. When he was told of the vision, he burst out in his most impatient manner (which he sometimes assumed in lieu of argument), and with his slight stammer, 'Tut,

tut, tut! Won't do at all. *He must have another vision!*' and his 'lightning of blue eyes' flashed from one Chinese official to the other, till they were completely disconcerted. The vision was duly amended by a fresh revelation.*

Piloted by Captain Ward, who had made the charts of the river during Lord Elgin's earlier expedition up the Yang-tsze, the squadron safely reached Hankow. An important duty now devolved upon Parkes. The river was opened as far as Hankow, but no regulations had been framed for the trade which was to follow the Admiral's flag there. It fell to Parkes to draw up Provisional Regulations by which British vessels would be guided until orders should be received from the Legation at Peking. These Regulations† dealt in a careful and minute manner with the issue of river passes, the carrying of arms, paying customs, reporting to consuls, port clearances, manifests, and all the other details of merchant shipping. Another responsible duty was 'the selection of a site for the foreign settlement, a matter of some moment and in respect to which no time should be lost. I was engaged on this subject and that of the Consul's residence the whole of 13th, 14th, 15th, and part of 16th, and had to go over a great deal of ground, and look at a good many houses, etc., as I had no less than three cities to explore,—Wuchang, Hanyang, and Hankow.'

Parkes describes the panic which seized upon the

* I have the story from Mr Alexander Michie, who accompanied the expedition.

† Published in *Parl. Papers*, 1861 [190], Correspondence respecting the Opening of the Yang-tsze Kiang, p. 18-21. These Regulations were accepted at headquarters; but at the close of 1862 they became the subject of correspondence between Mr Bruce and the Prince of Kung, and were somewhat modified.

poor people at their news of the approach of the Tai Ping—though still fifty miles away :—

‘The past week has been in some degree an exciting one, and we have seen more of the misery so rife in this poor country owing to the weakness and wretchedness of the Government which in the first place gave rise to the rebellion and now cannot put it down. Suddenly on the evening of the 18th it was known in Hankow and Wuchang that a body of rebels had appeared at or near Hwang-chow, two days' march (or fifty miles) from Hankow. One sole idea, that of flight, seized upon the whole population of these vast cities, and when day broke dense masses of boats were leaving the place conveying away the people as fast as they could embark. The panic spread and increased and amounted at the close of the day to a stampede, especially at one moment when a cry was raised that the rebels had reached the town. Then the people no longer walked but rushed frantically to the boats, and many threw themselves into the water and were drowned. The alarm that caused this rush proved eventually to be a false one. It was truly sad to see women and children abandoning their homes and starting off they scarcely knew whither, often with very scant provision for a journey. Those who could not get boats sat down on the river's brink, the women laden with babies and the men with the few chattels that they could most conveniently carry away.

‘I talked to many of them and asked them why they should be in such haste to leave the place—would not the mandarins defend it?—at all events why should they leave until they knew the rebels were moving on the place? Why lose their property by such undue haste? Property, they said,—we care little for that; we only want to save our lives, to do anything to get away from this city which attracts the rebels. The event proved two things most indisputably—(1) The utter inefficiency

of the mandarins and their inability to protect the people; (2) The perfect horror in which the people hold the rebels. I was very sorry for the people, and I also sympathized with the old Viceroy [Kwan Wan, who had received Lord Elgin at Wuchang in 1858], who is a very gentlemanly man, and suffers as much as the people from a wretchedly corrupt system that one man probably could do very little to alter. I finished my business with him, the chief item of which was the site for an English settlement. I had leased a very valuable lot 2750 feet long by 1210 feet broad, the length being all frontage which will allow room for about sixty lots and if properly laid out will make a very handsome settlement.'

At first the Viceroy endeavoured to insist on the old Chinese exclusiveness, but Parkes hastened to explain to him 'that ideas of this nature had long ago been set aside; that relations of a really friendly nature between the officials of the two nations were the great point to be arrived at; and that all restrictions that stood in the way of such relations should be carefully avoided. . . . Kwan Wan distinctly understood that no condition of the Treaty obliges British subjects to live in factories, as was the case at Canton, or on any particular spot.'

On leaving Hankow on the 22nd Parkes made a call at Hwang-chow to see what these rebels were about who had caused the panic. His report is worth quoting for its vivid picture of a city recently captured by the Tai Ping:—

'Her Majesty's gunboat *Bouncer* anchored at Hwang-chow at 11.15 A.M., and I landed with Messrs Hamilton and Ballance. An officer dressed in a long red silk gown, and accompanied by an attendant, who held a light blue satin umbrella of foreign shape over his master's head, received us on the beach, where we were soon surrounded by a crowd of rebels, who came running

from the suburbs and the intrenchments at which they were at work to look at us. On mentioning to the officer that I wished to see their principal leader, and should enter the city for that purpose, he simply stated that the leader's name was Chin,* and thought that he was absent in a camp outside the city. This officer was not very communicative, but gave the number of the rebels in Hwang-chow at 20,000 or 30,000 and stated that they had taken the city on the 18th instant without fighting. The suburb through which we passed was full of rebels who were busy foraging in the houses, which already bore the appearance of having been gutted, and were entirely deserted by the people; while other parties were engaged in demolishing all the buildings near the city wall, in order to clear the approach to the latter, and to obtain timber for a triple barricade which they were throwing up around the walls. At the gate by which we entered I observed a Proclamation in the name of the Ying Wang assuring the people of protection, and inviting them to come and trade freely with the troops. Another Proclamation addressed to the latter prohibited them from that date from wandering into the villages and plundering the people. A third notice, appended to the heads of two rebels, made known that these men had been executed for robbing the people of their clothes while engaged in collecting grain for the troops. The very motley garb of those rebels who surrounded us suggested the idea that many among them must have shared in the same offence; few of them wore any distinguishing dress, and while most of them had allowed their hair to grow, they all appeared to have preserved their tails. In reply to the inquiries I put them, I found them to be men collected from at least six or eight provinces;

* Chin Y-ching, the name of the Ying Wang or 'Heroic King,' also called the 'Four-eyed Dog.' He was the Tai Ping Minister of the Interior and a famous warrior. He was betrayed to the Imperial generals in 1862 and executed.

those from Hu Nan and Hu Peh probably predominated, and the large proportion of young lads attracted our attention.

‘Following the main street we soon came to the building which had been the yamun of the Prefect, where we found preparations being made to give us a formal reception. We were saluted with music and three guns, and were received by several officers dressed in yellow gowns, who conducted us through two large courts lined with troops, armed for the most part with spears or halberds and carrying a large number of very gaudy flags without any definite emblem. The doors of the principal hall, which usually stand open, were kept closed until we put foot upon the steps, when they were suddenly thrown back, and we saw seated in state, in the middle of the hall, a young-looking man, robed in a yellow satin gown and hood embroidered with dragons. A number of officers, dressed in long yellow gowns with yellow handkerchiefs on their heads, stood by him, but the crowd of men in coolie or menial garb who pressed into the hall interfered somewhat with the theatrical effect that it appeared intended these arrangements should produce. The principal personage seemed at a loss to know how to receive his visitors, and was evidently relieved when I drew a chair from a somewhat distant point to the table at which he was seated, and broke the silence by entering into conversation with him.

‘He informed me that he was the leader known as the Ying Wang (or Heroic Prince); that he was charged from Nanking to relieve Nganking, and had undertaken a westward movement with the view of gaining the rear of the Imperial force besieging that city on the western side. So far he had been completely successful. . . .

‘I explained to the Ying Wang that our objects in coming up the Yang-tsze were strictly commercial; that our recent Treaty with the Imperial Government,

with whom we were now at peace, gave us the right of trade upon the Yang-tsze, but as the insurgents utterly destroyed trade wherever they went, they would render this right nugatory if they occupied those ports that had been expressly opened to our commerce. Hanyang was one of three cities connected with each other, and forming one great mart, commonly called Hankow. The rebels could not take any one of these cities without destroying the trade of the whole emporium, and hence the necessity of their keeping away altogether. . . . The Ying Wang seemed to concur entirely in what I urged. He computed his own following at 100,000 men, but considered that scarcely half of them had reached Hwang-chow. . . .

'I was favourably impressed with the modest manners and the intelligence of the Ying Wang, and he appeared to be respected by those around him. His literary attainments are probably limited, though his pronunciation of Mandarin is better than that I have hitherto heard spoken by Tai Ping leaders. He gave his age at twenty only, but this is probably five or six years under the mark.

'After leaving him we walked round the city. This has long been in a decayed state, and when we visited it on the 10th instant, might have contained, in the small portion of its large area that is built over, including also the suburbs, a population of about 40,000. The whole of these had fled from the place, but every house was now filled with rebels, of whom we saw in all, probably, from 20,000 to 30,000. . . .

'The general appearance of the whole force was that of a mob, or probably that of a Pindaree host; but while no discernible steps were taken for preserving order among them, they all appeared on the best terms with each other; and although engaged in the exciting work of the division of plunder, or of accommodation, no instance of fighting, dispute or drunkenness came under our observation, nor did we see any

of them indulging either in gambling or in smoking tobacco.'

Before returning Parkes had several interviews with the rebel leaders at Nanking, with the object of inducing them to promise not to approach within 100 *li* of Shanghai; it took five days to gain their consent, but at last the promise was given and a general order issued on the authority of the 'Heavenly King.' These visits to the rebel quarters were not encouraging, and the outlook for China seemed dark and stormy. As Parkes himself said:—

'It is impossible to look far ahead just now in China. Now that the foreign troubles are over, the domestic ones are becoming more serious, and the whole condition of the Chinese Government is so "sick" that I have grave doubts whether it can recover itself. What is then to become of the country? The Nanking or Yang-tsze rebels, who are and have been for the last eight years preying upon the very vitals of the land, are powerful to destroy but not to construct. They can [do] and are doing much to overturn this dynasty, but I doubt altogether their power to establish another government in the room of that which they destroy. But they are not alone. Other provinces close to Peking are also overrun by formidable swarms of rebels, and I should not wonder to see these men take Peking and then commence war with the rebels of Nanking, or *vice versa*. Again there is a movement, subordinate to neither of the previous ones, going on in the western, and again another one in the southern, provinces. Alas, poor China! I do not doubt that eventually the country, if left to itself, will recover itself. It is now in the position of a diseased man whose whole system has to be cleared by violent remedies: they tear him and leave him prostrate; but then there is a reaction, which, if not checked, works out a recovery.'

The opening of the Yang-tsze to foreign trade was the most practical result, after the entry of the Legation into Peking, that was gained by the Treaty, and the opportunities thus afforded for commerce were immediately seized by British merchants in spite of the rebels. The establishing of the river ports was a difficult and delicate task. No one, probably, could have succeeded so admirably in its accomplishment as Parkes. Admiral Sir James Hope reported:—

‘I cannot conclude without expressing the conviction that to Mr Parkes’s thorough knowledge of the language and habits of the Chinese, and to the unwearyed zeal with which his aid was on all occasions placed at my disposition, I owe such success as may have attended my communications with the Chinese, whether Imperialists or Tai Ping.’

How important this extension of the boundaries of commerce was to England may be judged from the report of the delegates of the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce, published in 1869. It is there stated that whilst the opening of the four new ports in 1843 was a gain of at least £2,000,000 a year in English imports, the opening of the river and other ports in 1861 produced a further increase of £3,500,000 in the export trade of Great Britain.

had compelled him to take a troublesome journey for nothing and to bring up all his furniture to Tien-tsin, and then sell it at a loss to avoid the cost of moving it again; but he was glad to have an opportunity of seeing how foreigners were received at Peking, and of revisiting the spots which were associated in his memory with the most critical moments in his life. 'You may imagine,' he told his wife, 'the interest with which I gazed on old sights, the remains of the forts, the point at which I had been twice sent across the river on 21st August, Sinho and Tang-ku, with their respective battlefields.' As he rode along the old line of march, the country was a mass of snowy peach blossom, where it had formerly been covered with camps and mud. He slept the first night, after his forty-mile ride from Taku, at the Temple at Ho-si-wu where Lord Elgin had been quartered. The next day, riding on to Peking, he turned aside and visited alone the scene of his capture by Sangkolinsin's soldiers.

On the 19th April he was at the capital, explaining to the Prince of Kung the lamentable state of affairs on the Yang-tsze which he had himself witnessed. He found everything quiet at Peking:—

'We go about the streets entirely at our ease, attracting no attention from, and being always civilly treated by, the people. This is a great fact. . . . I feel that our work of the last and previous years is not without its fruits, and that we have attained what we have been striving for—immunity from insult from the authorities and people of this land, from the highest to the lowest. The worst is that we have brought the Government into proper order only at a time when it is beginning to crumble to pieces, so that much of our labour may be

thrown away and we may soon have to indoctrinate another party.'

There was a very general impression at that time that the dynasty of the Manchus was doomed; and certainly the persistent refusal of the Emperor to return to Peking and take the lead in repressing the rebellion looked like inviting his own destruction.

Mr Bruce received Parkes with many encomiums on his work in opening the river ports, and Wade was of course delighted to welcome his old comrade. But the general aspect of the Legation did not satisfy the visitor. He found its chief too easy-going and indolent, and more disposed to play his daily rubber at the Bourboulons than to impress the dignity of his office upon the Chinese. The Legation struck him as badly managed, the establishment 'dirty and ill dressed,' and the whole effect 'mean.' The duties of the Chinese Secretary did not attract him, and he was not sorry that he had not to perform them. In spite of the interest he took in riding about Peking and the neighbourhood, he was glad to leave. If he stayed in China it was for work, not for amusement.

He had no sooner arrived at Shanghai in June than he had again to go up to Nanking and talk to 'twenty ignorant, arrogant, stiff-necked, and stupid rebel leaders' to prevent them attacking the British settlements. At length he got back to his old yamun at Canton, where he was much wanted, and felt happier in the regular routine of his work—always, however, keeping his eyes fixed on the longed-for return to England. In July he was cheered by a visit from his brother-in-law Mr Lockhart, who was then on his way out to open the hospital at Peking, which was destined to a remarkable

success. Mr Lockhart found him—after ten years' separation—

‘Well, but he feels all his work, and ought to be relieved from all the anxiety and fret of perpetual labour. He is hearty, eager and active in his work, but the everlasting strain on him will do harm if kept up too long. . . . It is a great thing to wander in the city of Canton without let or hindrance. The people do not call names, but are civil and as far as can be seen do not seem malicious. After all that was said of the Canton people, they are as quiet and well-behaved as the people of Shanghai. We can go into the shops and chat with the people, who are glad to see us. The shops are very fine, the streets are full of business, and all work is at its full swing. The suburbs are much burned, but in the city, except in certain parts, trade and work are in full progress. Shameen, the new site for the factories, is a fine place. This is in great degree Harry's work. A portion of the river bank has been cleared, filled up with sand that is raised well from the water; a heavy stone river wall built about five or six feet above high water; and this makes a beautiful site for the foreign buildings. This great work is just finished, and the lots of ground are to be sold immediately to the foreign merchants, and houses built.

‘Harry and I are like two schoolboys, rejoicing over each other immensely. We have talked over heaps of things and have always much to say to each other. . . . He is greatly respected here: he is felt to be a power in himself—an intelligent power—and he has been made the instrument of great good to this people.’

One great object of Parkes's anxiety was realized in September when the sale of the Shameen site took place:—

‘The grand Shameen sale has come off (he wrote to his wife, Canton, September 8). The tendency on the

part of the merchants has been to depreciate this position, and it appeared uncertain therefore whether they would care to reimburse the Government for the cost of preparing the site for them; and of course I felt that if none or only a limited use were made of the site much time and trouble on my part would have been thrown away. There is no doubt that the opening of the Yang-tsze will tell in some degree unfavourably on Canton; Hankow, the chief Yang-tsze port, having hitherto been supplied from Canton and sent the produce, which it will now sell to our people on the spot, to this port. We gave nearly six weeks' notice of sale, and when the time came the work was only just completed. To effect this I had been obliged to hurry and worry the contractor, who had fallen all behindhand, in consequence, as he said, of heavy rain, but really I believe because I have been so much absent from Canton (I mean in the North); and during the last few days he had about 600 men at work both night and day.

'On the 2nd, a *White Cloud* [steamer] day, all the merchants came trooping up from Hongkong, all more or less in a grumbling mood—a sign to my mind that they were going to buy, as it is a peculiarity of John Bull to growl when he is about to pay out money. The site is divided into eighty-two lots. Robertson has reserved no less than six for the Consulate and consular officers and offices, and one for a Church, so we had seventy-five to put up. Our expenditure had amounted to 280,000 dollars, say nearly £70,000, and this we wanted to recover by the sale. The auction came off in the hut which I have built on Shameen. . . . There the lieges assembled, and we were glad to see that the bidding became fast and furious, and the end of the first day's sale showed a very good result. The Parsees bid right royally against our first-class merchants for front lots, which were put up at four thousand dollars, and realized five, six, seven, and eight thousand dollars.

For back lots however we did not get any bids. The sale closed on the second day when we had sold fifty-five lots for 248,000 dollars, leaving a balance of 32,000 dollars still wanting; but against this we have twenty lots valued at double that sum still remaining, over and above the six Consulate lots and the Church lot, all of which will thus be obtained gratis. I have no doubt that the remaining twenty lots will be eventually sold, and it is an advantage to have some ground still on hand for the supply of future wants.

‘Thus Shameen may now be considered a complete success, and you will understand the satisfaction I feel that such is the case. Mr Bruce will doubtless be well pleased, for he has hitherto been left to sustain the responsibility of the scheme,—the Government, not knowing how the project would turn out and probably not being over well pleased to see Government money spent upon it, having never yet given him a word of encouragement or approval. However, now I daresay they will tell Mr Bruce that they are satisfied with his proceedings in the matter. I have still a few accounts to wind up and then Shameen will be entirely off my hand, and on Robertson’s.

‘Important news has reached me to-day. . . . It is nothing less than the death of the Emperor of China. To-morrow I hope I may receive some letters from Peking that may enable me to judge of the effect this event is likely to produce on the capital. It may lead either to the renovation or the downfall of the present Government. I am inclined to take the brighter view, for we have long felt that the late Emperor and the clique of bad favourites by whom he was surrounded stood in the way of all improvement, and that this could not be looked for while he remained alive and they in power. If their influence has died with their late sovereign, we may hope that all will go well. It does not appear to be known who will succeed the Emperor, but as his son is very young (only seven

years of age) one of his brothers will probably receive the crown,—say the Prince of Kung or another one who was with the Emperor at Jehol. It is to be hoped that it will be the former one, and that the true statesmen of the country who have been keeping in the background for years past will now step forward and assert their right to aid in the Government, in the place of those wretched favourites above alluded to,—wretches who hearing that the Prince of Kung was in negotiation with Lord Elgin in October last sent orders for the *execution* of all the prisoners in the hope of thereby extinguishing all chance of that accommodation being effected [to] which they were opposed. A merciful Providence so willed it, however, that this bloody order did not reach Peking until after we were liberated, or I should probably not be writing you this note of the circumstance.

‘I went in and told [Viceroy] Laou of the news. It agitated him a great deal at first, which is remarkable, as the Chinese generally conceal all show of feeling; but he also is inclined to take a hopeful view of the event and to believe that it will tell to the advantage of the country. He has a great admiration for the Empress,* who from his account must be a woman of great energy and courage. When our army was approaching Peking she opposed the flight of the Emperor, and, when he fled, staid behind in Peking and was there until we quitted it. Then she started off to Tartary (Jehol) to prevail on the Emperor to return; but not succeeding, she insisted upon bringing her son, the heir apparent, back with her to Peking, where both of them now are. Instances have been known in the history of China of the throne being given to an infant with the Queen-Mother acting as Regent. In this case the Empress appears well able

* This is the same Dowager Empress of whom so much has been heard lately (1901).

to fill such a post, but with brothers of the late Emperor at hand it is not probable that it will devolve upon her. What a grand thing a noble woman is! Here is the Empress of China, the Queen of England, and another queen that I could mention, who unlike the two others has certainly a very very small realm to rule over, but yet governs it in a manner that all other queens of affection might take pattern by. I would far rather stand in her court just now than in that of the other two.

'I was not sorry to get back from Hongkong. Holidays by oneself . . . one soon gets tired of, and as quarters I prefer my little yamun home to any of the mercantile mansions.'

He entertained a warm liking for the Governor of the Colony, and wrote that 'Lady Robinson has done a great deal to improve the sociability of the Hongkong people, and Government House presents a very different sight in these days to what it did formerly,' but happy as he was among a few congenial friends, Parkes was not at his best in general society, spoke little, and was ill equipped with the resources of small-talk. He used to devote himself unselfishly to the entertainment of neglected wall-flowers, and many an old lady sitting out in the cold had a grateful memory of his attention. Formal society 'bored' him, as they must a man whose whole soul is in his work, and whose interests are centred in his own immediate duties.

The great work of the autumn of 1861 was the evacuation of Canton. Lord Elgin had urged the withdrawal of our troops at the earliest practicable moment; but the French were decidedly averse to relaxing their hold, and the European community in China was generally desponding as to the results

of leaving Canton to the mercy of the Tai Ping rebels.

'People, (he wrote, June 12,) are all prophesying the downfall of Canton directly the troops are removed; but whether this be the result or not—and it is not likely to occur immediately—it is impossible for our Government to go on garrisoning Canton, not for purposes of our own, but for the defence of the Chinese. We have long ago attained all the objects we originally had in taking the place, and now the sooner we get out of it the better, before fresh complications arise. One source of apprehension—viz. that the French when once they had an army in China would not readily withdraw—promises to be removed. They have already had to call off nearly all their troops to reinforce their expedition in Cochin China.'

Parkes's despatch on taking leave of his Commissionership deserves to be quoted:—

'I have the honour to report, for the information of Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that the evacuation of Canton by the allied troops was completed on the 21st [October], and that on that morning possession of the city was restored to the Chinese authorities.

'The arrangements for this event had been previously announced to the Chinese in the proclamation issued by the Tartar General-in-Chief, the Viceroy of the two Kwang provinces, and the Governor of the Province of Kwang-tung, . . . recording in a few true and forcible words the manner in which the occupation has been conducted, and the good effects resulting from it. It is a well-merited tribute to the behaviour both of the allied troops and the Chinese population, and affords evidence of the necessity and the success of a measure which is now happily terminated.

'A remarkable proof of the good feeling that has been maintained between the allied troops and the

people may be seen in the fact that during the three years and ten months that the occupation continued, only two instances occurred in which attempts to take life were committed by the Chinese upon our men. I except, of course, from this general statement the frequent attacks made by hired assassins during the hostilities of the summer of 1858, when, following their usual mode of treacherous and cowardly warfare, the Chinese Government set a price, rising in the case of certain individuals to an immense sum, on the head of every man or subject of the allies. It should also be noticed, as a proof of the mildness of the military rule of the latter, that the two offenders in the instances above mentioned were the only Chinese who suffered capital punishment at our hands during the whole period of the occupation.

'The same respect evinced towards the troops has been likewise shown by the Chinese towards all foreigners. Prior to the occupation, the foreigner passed through the streets of the suburbs only—for, as is well known, within the city he was not allowed to set his foot—at the risk of being insulted, or assailed with stones and the vilest invective. This tone and language was laid aside from the moment of the capture of the city: and the single foreigner may now walk about its streets or suburbs, or penetrate, as many have done, into remote parts of the province, with the same degree of security as is enjoyed at those other ports where the Chinese authorities have insisted on proper behaviour on the part of the people or have not incited them to oppose or annoy the foreigner. The occupation has at least proved that most of the professedly popular opposition which we encountered at Canton prior to its capture was the effect of official instigation, and as the political end which the mandarins then attempted to serve no longer exists, we may hope that any repetition of this double-dealing on their part will not be experienced.

'Much of the credit of the present friendly disposition of the people is due to the orderly behaviour and the efficiency of the allied police, five-sixths of whom were taken from the British force. To these men the people would run for aid and protection under all circumstances, and applications for the interference of the allied Commissioners in strictly native matters, which in most cases were reserved for the action of the Chinese tribunals, were also constantly pressed with the same degree of eagerness. The confidence of the people in a strong and inoppressive Government, added to their own governable character, materially facilitated the task of maintaining order in a vast and most intricate city, containing a population of upwards of 1,000,000 inhabitants.

'The satisfactory change in the conduct of the authorities and people towards foreigners, and the consequently improved position of the latter, is doubtless the principal result of the occupation, and the one that was most to be desired; but other monuments of the event will remain in the Shameen site, and the introduction of an organized system of emigration. The former work has set at rest a long-vexed question which has formed an element in many of the old Canton misunderstandings. The community have been provided with most commodious building ground, obtained without any encroachment on the public or private interests of the Chinese, at an outlay proportioned, it is true, to the great extent of the accommodation obtained, but which, although undertaken, in the first instance, on Government responsibility, has already been nearly repaid by the community. The latter measure, emigration, being now confirmed by Treaty, has secured a new and unlimited supply of labour for the British West Indian and other Colonies, and the present is now the third year in which advantage has been taken of the arrangement.'

Earl Russell's official approval of Parkes's manage-

ment of the duties of Commissioner was conveyed to Mr Bruce (December 30) in the following terms :—

‘I have received from Mr Parkes a despatch reporting the termination of his duties as one of the Allied Commissioners for the Government of the city of Canton, and I have to instruct you to convey to Mr Parkes Her Majesty’s entire approbation of the tact, judgment, and ability which he has shown during the whole period that he has acted as British Commissioner.’

So ended a memorable epoch, not only in Parkes’s life, but in the history of our relations with the Chinese. The establishment of the Commission was a risky experiment, but it had proved a signal success ; it had made the Cantonese familiar with British methods of government, and, contrary to the adage, familiarity had bred respect and even esteem. That this was mainly due to Harry Parkes no one who knows anything about the working of the Commission will doubt. He, in fact, was the Commission. His British colleague followed his lead, and his French colleague as often as not tried to thwart him : but neither had much influence in the result. Whatever was done was done by Parkes. His untiring energy, his attention to details, and above all his inflexible justice and intimate knowledge of the people with whom he had to deal, accomplished the extraordinary success which attended the administration of a great Chinese city under European influence.

Leaving his old colleague of Shanghai days, Sir Brooke Robertson, to hoist the British flag for the first time at the Consulate *within* the city of Canton, Parkes journeyed to Ningpo, at the Admiral’s request, to endeavour to persuade the rebels to spare the city or at least to abstain from injuring our Consulate and commerce ; but Ningpo had fallen before he arrived on

December 9th, and several interviews with the Tai Ping leaders convinced him of their moderation towards the inhabitants and their friendly disposition towards foreigners. 'Roman Catholics and Protestants,' he wrote, 'they hailed indiscriminately, as being of the same religious fraternity as themselves!' At last he was free to depart and take his well-earned leave, and January 1862 found him abroad the *Columbian* on his way home.

Before he left, however, strange things had been happening at Peking. In a letter to his wife of October 20th 1861 we read:—

'A marvellous *coup d'état* has been executed by Prince Kung's party and the Empress-Dowager. For several years prior to his death, the late Emperor had been in the hands of a set of men of very profligate character who did all they could to ruin their misguided sovereign and their country. We had experience of their vicious counsel in the affair of the Taku forts of 1859 and the war which followed last year. The leading men of this party were Tsai Yuen (or Prince of I), Twanhwa (or Prince of Ching), and Sushun, brother of the latter, but who held no princely rank. . . . Having carried the Emperor away into Tartary and rendered him almost insensible by ministering only to his dissipated habits, they easily succeeded in keeping all better influences away from him, and the opposite party headed by the Prince of Kung were unable to effect the Emperor's return, which they were striving to bring about when I was at Peking.'

'In the end he died; and now it would appear from the State papers just published that the Council of Administration, consisting of the above three and five others, was *self-elected*, and not appointed by the Emperor as they gave out. One story is that the Emperor, stung with remorse when he found himself

on his deathbed, confided to the Empress, and to her alone, at his last moments, a plan for ridding the throne and the country of these traitors. However that may be, the Empress and the Prince of Kung, or both together, persuaded the council of eight to bring the young Emperor to Peking, and as soon as they arrived (the peace party being strong at the capital, while the war party was all-powerful in Tartary) they were all arrested. A week sufficed to try them all ; the three were sentenced to death—one, Sushun, in the common market-place, the two others (including my capturer) by their own hand,—while the others have been degraded or banished. The Prince of Kung being himself only a young man of thirty-one has probably had to exert himself in the matter more than he wished, and had been urged to take this grand measure by the party of which he was the head, all of whom probably did not feel their own heads safe so long as the other party were in power. The man who has probably had most to do in the matter is Wanseang, a very promising statesman of about eight-and-forty, of whom I have seen a good deal during both the visits I paid to Peking.'

Mr Lockhart was actually a bystander at the execution of Sushun, lately the most powerful Minister in China. The condemned man had brushed past him as he walked to his death :

' How marvellous [wrote Parkes] that any foreigner, and *you* that foreigner, should have witnessed such a scene. . . . Surely we may trace the finger of God in these events, and trust that they augur well for the future of China. I am sure that they will infuse new vigour into the provincial authorities, if, at least, they see that the Prince of Kung proves equal to the situation, and with new vigour and less corruption we yet may see peace or order return to this poor torn country.'

CHAPTER XVI

SHANGHAI

1864-1865

THE two years' leave passed rapidly in a whirl of visits, and public and private engagements, Parkes returned to England a marked man, and his distinction involved the usual social penalties. Receptions and meetings of all descriptions, from Lord Palmerston's dinners and the Lord Mayor's banquets, to the assemblies of learned societies and the delivery of a lecture at Leeds, occupied his time. He was *bien vu* in society, and at the Athenæum Club, to which he had been elected by the Committee *honoris causa* in 1858, he met a number of the people he most cared to see. He went a good deal to country houses, and his energy found its exercise in two tours in Scotland and one in Switzerland, where he revisited the scenes that had impressed his imagination in 1850, and made the ascent of Mont Blanc. He joined the 3rd Middlesex Volunteers, and attended the Easter Monday Review at Brighton in 1863. But all this restless activity was not good for his health. He had come home in a nervous shattered condition, and repose was what he needed. Altogether, though he enjoyed much domestic happiness in the house he took at Hampstead, he did not get the rest and quiet he needed, and when he

his two years at home had not restored, added to the difficulty, and we find him frequently complaining of a nervous irritability which had grown upon him during the long years of stress and strain. 'I am afraid I do not take things sufficiently easily,' he wrote, 'for I am frequently in a gale.' He looked upon the office work as 'a course of discipline that had been prescribed.' 'I must take my turn at what is the drudgery of the service, at work that does not tell publicly. Of work that brings in honours I have had a fair share, and now have to take my turn at the hewing of wood and drawing of water, which I think is as hard as the former, with less credit. However, all these things are arranged for us. The extreme monotony of the life is very irksome.' 'I am still "pegging along," as Mr Lincoln would say; almost stupefied with the drudgery of the office, both the quantity and quality of it,—but still getting on, though in faith it is dull enough.' 'I sometimes wish I were a cleverer man; but contentment would be a far more valuable gift.'

Parkes was disposed to attend too much to the details of the office, and his own conscientious minuteness, added to almost feverish restlessness, led him to drive his subordinates rather hard. But no master was more really kind, when sympathy was wanted, none more loyal and staunch to his men; and they knew it. 'We were one and all proud of him,' said one of them to the writer; 'and I never heard a man in the service say a word against him.'

His days passed in steady grinding at the official mill, in the uninteresting details of merchant shipping, in manifests and clearance passes, in constant interruptions, in endless correspondence, in getting his staff

into order ; but very often all his routine work had to be set aside and allowed to get behindhand while he was compelled to sit for days together on the bench to try cases in his capacity of judge. Sometimes these trials, which were 'the worry of his life,' lasted more than a week, and the sittings began at nine and were often not over at four. It was no wonder that he urged upon the Government the necessity of appointing a Consular Judge. He called himself 'an old 'bus horse,' and protested that he had 'no time for calls and never saw a lady.' He did not care much for Shanghai society, unaccompanied by his wife, whose health and the care of her three children compelled her to stay in England till 1865. 'People,' he told her, 'are so hard up for conversation here that unless a lady sings or plays, or can get up some fun of some kind, the parties are wofully dull.' 'The dancing contagion is very strong among the women here, and as long as music will play they will dance.' He was out of tune with ballroom gaiety, and found little of the intellectual society for which he always craved. He made few new friends : 'although intimate with no one, I have yet fallen out with no one,' he writes ; 'I am terribly lonely.' There is of course a great deal of exaggeration in this, and if Sir Harry's bright and cheerful temperament was ever capable of it, one would say he had become morbid ; he certainly was passing through a phase of gloom and dissatisfaction which pointed to overtaxed energies and nervous exhaustion. Trifles, such as the disorder of the Consulate repairs and alterations, annoyed him : 'I am in the most intense discomfort,' he wrote in September 1864, 'with the roof off and the rain and the elements making complete

sport of me.' Had he been in good health and spirits, and doing work which he liked, he would have laughed at the invasion of the workmen; but he had got into a crooked angle of his life, everything seemed an obstacle, and he was never really happy again till he left Shanghai for Japan, where his wife joined him and the loneliness vanished away.

In June his feeling of isolation was increased by the departure of his brother-in-law for England. Mr Lockhart had been busily engaged, since the establishment of the Legation at Peking, in organizing a free hospital of the Medical Mission at the capital, in the same manner as he had founded similar institutions at Shanghai and elsewhere. During the two and a half years which had passed since he opened his hospital in the autumn of 1861 over 30,000 patients had been treated for all classes of disease. Parkes keenly sympathized in his labours, and expressed the highest admiration of their results. In a letter of 10th May 1862 he wrote:—

'I have felt the greatest interest in your proceedings at Peking, and see with thankfulness the marvellous extent to which your work has been blessed. . . . The *political* good which your proceedings must have will be very great, and *your Mission* will achieve more than the Diplomatic in impressing the masses of Peking in our favour. Surely with you in your present position, we may say that China is really opened to the missionary, and perhaps the circumstance of your not being connected in any way with our officials leaves you all the more independent. Your hospital I look upon as the most marked incident in our relations with China that has occurred since the signing of the last Treaty, and most sincerely do I pray that you may go on and prosper.'

Later experience only confirmed these first impressions, and Parkes was sorry when Mr Lockhart felt that the time had come to return to England and his family, after a quarter of a century of hard work in China. In July another departure took place. Sir Frederick Bruce left China, never to return. A year later he took up the post of Minister to the United States, in succession to Lord Lyons, and died of cholera at Boston in 1867. In his absence Wade, who was now Secretary of Legation, took charge of the Mission, until the arrival of the new minister, Sir Rutherford Alcock, in 1865. Alcock himself called at Shanghai on his sudden recall from Japan in January 1865 :—

‘He is full of talk and feels very jolly, because satisfied that he is in the right and the Government in the wrong, in which I entirely agree, and they will have to indemnify him in some way for his recall. He left home with full sanction of the Government to employ force to bring the recalcitrant daimios to book whenever he could get a chance and force. A battalion of marines and a regiment of infantry, in addition to the whole navy of the station, were furnished him for this express purpose. But when the Manchester party raised an outcry against the first symptom of force being employed, the Government would not declare that they had authorized the course, but as a sop to Bright and Cobden recalled their Minister. It is . . . unlike Lord Palmerston, who has always backed his men ; but he is not in the Foreign Office and has to give way to his colleagues occasionally, I fancy.’

At Shanghai two subjects specially engaged Parkes’s attention : one was the internal government of Shanghai ; the other, the use to be made of the ‘Ever Victorious Army’ after the Tai Ping rebellion had been suppressed and ‘Chinese Gordon’ had given up his command. The

former was a delicate matter to handle. The site of the European settlement at Shanghai was in no sense foreign property ; it had not been conquered, bought, or rented from the Chinese Government ; it was still as much Chinese territory as the Chinese city at its side. The English merchants of the flourishing young community had, however, adopted the theory that the British settlement was a sort of separate kingdom of their own. They established a Municipal Council, a most necessary and useful body, to raise taxes from the community in order to pay for the police, for keeping up the roads and foreshore, and generally maintaining the settlement in good order. The Council, however, were disposed to go beyond their proper and legal functions, and to assume powers which belonged to the Chinese authorities, whom they practically ignored ; and as the foreign settlement was crowded with Chinese, who had fled thither before the devastating advance of the Tai Ping, it became a serious question who was to keep order and punish crime amongst them.

Parkes had perceived the difficulty the moment he arrived on the scene, and with characteristic courage attacked it forthwith. It needed some resolution to bring the Council of 'merchant princes' back to what he called 'their proper position,' and to do so without wounding their pride was perhaps impossible. One who was there at the time, and who did not agree with Parkes's view, writes that no one but he could have carried out the task he had set before him, in opposition to the leaders of the British community. His prestige, his personal popularity, and his indomitable persistence won the day without losing the good feeling of his subjects. Had any one else attempted to bring the

Municipal Council of Shanghai to book, it is probable that reasons would have been discovered by Government to transfer him to a less high-stomached port.

It will be remembered that when Parkes left China at the beginning of 1862 the rebels had possession of a considerable tract of country along the Yang-tsze Kiang and were menacing Shanghai. When he returned in the spring of 1864 he found the situation completely changed. Colonel Gordon had taken command of the Chinese irregulars, who under Ward and Burgevine had failed to subdue the Tai Ping, and in his hands this rough and semi-disciplined force had achieved wonders. The rebels had been repeatedly defeated and driven back, Soochow had fallen in 1863, and Gordon, who had resumed the command which he resigned after the treacherous execution of the 'princes' by Li Hung Chang, was completing his work in April 1864. The news reached Parkes on his way out: 'Gordon has overcome his griefs and is again doing the Imperialists good service;' and by the time the Consul had settled down to his duties at Shanghai, the rebels had been driven out of nearly all their positions except Nanking, which was closely besieged, and fell in July.

Gordon and Parkes corresponded frankly and frequently. In a letter of April 4th we find some of Gordon's characteristic views on the situation:—

' . . . I am now going very cautiously to work, and, as good fortune would have it, have every chance of causing a split between Cantonese and Kiang Si men on one side and the other rebels on the other. Chung Wang's adopted son Se-tsun is with the Expeditionary Force. He is a Hu Peh man, twenty-four years old, and his brother shaved his head* at Soochow, and is

* *i.e.* surrendered: the 'long-haired rebels,' *chang-mao tsei*, resumed the Manchu tonsure in token of submission.

in July; and the Colonel saw no reason for prolonging his command when the task he had set himself was accomplished.

In dispatches addressed to the Viceroy Li Hung-Chang and Gordon on the 18th and 19th May, Sir Harry protested against the disbandment of the 'Chinese Disciplined Force.' He reminded them that this force had been originally formed for the defence of Shanghai and the circuit of thirty miles round; that it had been placed under Gordon's command for this purpose by an agreement between Li and General Staveley, then commanding the British troops in China, in January 1863; that this agreement could not be rescinded without the consent of both parties; and that so long as there were any rebels in arms, the original purpose, of protecting Shanghai, dictated the maintenance of the army, which ought, now that the campaigns were over, to revert to its primary duties as part of the garrison of the port and surrounding district. Ever since the rebels had taken Soochow in 1860, the allied troops had defended Shanghai, and the 'Chinese Disciplined Force,' first known as 'Ward's,' had been organized to relieve them of part of their responsibility. The allied troops were soon to be withdrawn, and 'after all the cost and inconvenience incurred by H.M.'s Government in defending Shanghai for four years they may naturally require, in order to avoid a recurrence of this trouble, that the native force which relieves them of the charge of the place should possess an organization and character that will attract their confidence.' If Gordon's force disappeared, what guarantee was there that the Chinese army would be able to prevent a repetition of the three sieges of

Shanghai which they had failed to avert during the past ten years?

Parkes undoubtedly had reason on his side, and Gordon agreed with him in the main, though he could not very well take sides against Li, who insisted on the break-up of the force. General Brown, who was in command of the British troops, wrote, 'I am not for disbanding any portion of the Disciplined Force until we see the fate of Nanking and the retreat of the rebels. I am also for keeping up a corps of disciplined Chinese at Shanghai. . . . It is a great strategical point and should be made the place of a regular cantonment.' In all the circumstances it was clearly right to require a reference to the British Minister before taking a step at once so serious and irrevocable. Li, however, took offence at the demand, and complained of the tone of Parkes' letters; and meanwhile the disbandment went on. Gordon came himself to Shanghai to smooth over the difficulty, which was partly due to his own somewhat precipitate action; and Parkes was induced to pay a visit to the Viceroy at Soochow, which ended in the establishment of a Camp of Instruction where Chinese troops were to be formed into a disciplined body for the defence of the port. The plan was warmly supported by Gordon, who agreed to start the new scheme and suggested the formation of several such camps, where the Chinese might learn under British officers to dispense by degrees with their help.

The two men had become fast friends. Each was able to appreciate the other's energetic qualities: both knew a *man* when they saw him. 'He stays with me,' wrote Parkes in July, 'whenever in Shanghai and is a fine

noble generous fellow, but at the same time very peculiar and sensitive—exceedingly impetuous—full of energy, which just wants judgment to make it a very splendid type. . . . We have seen a good deal of each other when he is here, for as he is very shy I try as much as possible to dine alone, and we then tattle on on Chinese affairs all to ourselves.' It was obvious that Gordon would not long endure the monotony of the stationary camp, and one is not surprised to read in November:—

'Gordon goes home by this mail and will make a point of seeing you, even if at Tunbridge Wells. He had grown tired of his last job of forming a Camp of Instruction, which is far too *slow* an occupation to be suited to his active and somewhat erratic tastes, and being unsuited he has not made a very good job of it. The matter therefore passed into my hands, and after some fighting with Li Fu-tai (the Governor of the province) who withheld the support that Gordon should have received, I have reorganized and reinvigorated the scheme, and it is now passing into the hands of Major Jebb and half a dozen other officers whom I made Li Fu-tai apply for. Gordon had not received assistance enough either from our Government or the Chinese, and what is now arranged must be regarded still as experimental. I trust, however, it is the germ of something effectual, and that we may secure from it the organization of such a force as will keep rebels from this neighbourhood. They are to be met with elsewhere, however. Amoy and Swatow have been thrown into alarm, and Hankow also, by the approach of marauding hordes, and it will be some time before China loses the pest altogether; in fact, without a reformed Government she will not part with them—and that again is a very great question. Perhaps years hence we may have a divided empire—a North and South—in the oldest country in the world as well as in the youngest.'

'Shanghai, November 24.—I was writing—very late on this occasion I am sorry to say—when Gordon came in to wish me good-bye, and he has just left me to go on board. Of course we closed in round the fire and had a chat and a cigar—or rather he smoked, for I am off my tobacco just now, as I have caught a cold and am out of sorts. But I joined him in a glass of port wine—your port,—the first bottle of which I opened three days ago, and I have thought of you and drunk your health over every glass I have yet taken. The taste of the wine always brings back to me Hampstead with great vividness—thus do trifles waken up past associations. But to return to Gordon, who is now gone, I told him he has reason to be thankful that he has been permitted to leave this country alive, or with a whole skin. He is a very shy man and when at Shanghai will not call upon a soul; but I am glad to see that the community on hearing that he was off, have marked their respect for him by an address of which, when I caught sight of it, I took a copy and sent it to Earl Russell with a covering letter pointing out that such acknowledgments were the only reward he cared to take in the country he has so greatly benefited. . . . He has refused money whenever it has been offered to him, and has served throughout on a very low rate of pay. . . . I have no doubt he will find you out, for he is not a man to spare himself trouble, and he will not allow himself to be involved in a London whirl, which will possess little fascination for him. He is a reserved retiring man, and avoids glitter and bustle of all kinds.'

The Camp of Instruction at Fung Hwang Shan was a subject of considerable anxiety to the British authorities, in view of the approaching withdrawal of the English troops from Shanghai, when the foreign settlement would have to depend upon Chinese protection. About the New Year Parkes went up to see

how the work of drilling and disciplining the force was going on ; and on the 14th February he paid a visit to the Fu-tai or Governor-General, Li Hung-Chang, at Soochow to impress upon him the importance of providing for the safety of Shanghai on the departure of the British garrison. Li appears to have received him with scant courtesy, and referring to Sir Harry's Order of the Bath took the opportunity to mention 'by the same name,' as his visitor indignantly reported, 'the nondescript ornaments which he has himself invented and issued to the foreigners in his employ.' The Fu-tai had not approved of the Camp of Instruction from the first, and regarded it as an interference with his government of the province, which he professed himself perfectly able to manage in his own way. Instructions from Peking, however, compelled him to promise his support to the institution, and after some discussion he was induced to pledge himself to some further improvements in the military organization in view of the defence of the port. But the pledges of Li were not always redeemable.

In May Sir Harry went up the Yang-tsze for the last time to see how his infant ports were getting on. 'The river ports,' he said, 'I look upon as chickens that I had something to do in hatching. The settlements at all of them are built on ground that I selected, and on my own responsibility leased for the British Government, who have sublet to the merchants. Had I not been thus prompt other foreigners would have secured this ground, which is admitted to be the best at each port.' He made his tour of inspection at his usual express rate : left Shanghai on a Wednesday at midnight in a storm of rain, did the 200 miles run to

Chinkiang by five the next afternoon, stayed two hours and looked into everything, reached Kiukiang at midnight on Friday, roused up Consul Hughes out of his bed to tell him what the 'braves' were doing, and was off again at two in the morning for Hankow, which was reached that afternoon. Here he had a rest, as far as anything to do with Parkes could be called rest, and spent four days in pleasant company, before returning at top speed to Shanghai. He was satisfied on the whole with what he saw, and thoroughly enjoyed the trip. One of the missionaries at Hankow, the Rev. Griffith John, wrote (26th May) of this visit:—'Sir Harry Parkes was here last week. He looks remarkably well, and like myself wants nothing but his wife and children to make him feel quite happy. He called on me twice, and we had about three hours together. He went with me to see the chapel and schools, and seemed quite pleased with what he saw. I enjoyed my chat with him very much, and do think him a first-rate fellow. I was much pleased with his interest in the missionary work. He seems to believe in it, which very few out of the missionary circle do.'

During his period of official discipline at Shanghai Parkes had never ceased to buoy himself up, amid the monotony and irksomeness of his duties, with the hope of a change. Sometimes he talked of a speedy retirement from public life, and a placid old age (he was now thirty-seven!) in some rural retreat in England, where, if he could not sit under his own vine, at least he could delve the ground, which in depressed moments he was wont to declare an infinitely preferable occupation to incessant quill-driving and winding up useless foolscap sheets with meaningless 'obedient' 'humble

servants.' But generally his thoughts turned to Japan. For years he had longed to visit the beautiful islands, and his letters are full of references to the chances of his being appointed to succeed Sir Rutherford Alcock as Minister there. He watched the progress of the struggle going on in Japan with breathless interest. Alcock's difficulties made him exclaim sometimes that he was glad he was not in that Minister's shoes: but he was not really glad. In his dreary routine of office drudgery he pined for excitement, responsibility, and even danger. It may be imagined, therefore, with what delight he received the news that he had been appointed by the Queen to the Legation at Yedo. The honour was the more delightful since he had not asked for it in anyway, and the fact that his old chief Alcock had recommended him to Earl Russell was an added pleasure.

'The appointment,' he wrote to his wife, 'is particularly gratifying to me, as it lifts me at a stride into the higher branch of the service; and it is not often that a man of my age, without any advantages of birth, has the opportunity of representing the Queen and country at another nation. I only trust that I may be able to fulfil these responsibilities, and that our interests may not suffer by being confided to my charge. The first few months will be trying ones, as I shall have much to learn, as was the case when I arrived here, before I feel myself well in my saddle, and although it is just on an occasion like this that my heart aches for the solace and encouragement that your presence would afford me, perhaps it is as well that I should get the first efforts over before you come out, as you know the uncomfortable struggle that I have to go through with new work in order to obtain the mastery over it. I do not know what trials may be in store for me; some of course I must expect; but I feel now,

and trust I may continue to do so, great thankfulness for all the mercies bestowed upon me, coupled with a trust in that good Father who has hitherto so signally watched over me and protected me. You will have to share my responsibilities, but I have no fear for your acquitting yourself well of these, for you have far better tact than I have—as indeed is the case with most women as compared with men.'

Towards the end of June 1865 Sir Harry Parkes left China, as he believed, for ever. A few years of Japan, and then retirement, seems to have been his forecast of the future :—

'One advantage at all events of our new post is that we may make it a *home*, for if all goes well with us—*i.e.* if we keep our health and are able to keep at work, I may expect to find that my sphere of duty for some time to come; for I do not think they would transfer me to Peking on Sir R. Alcock's departure, as it would probably be considered only fair that Wade, who has laboured as hard as I have, and is a far more clever man, should have a chance, for which he will have waited long enough. If, as I say, therefore, I retain my health, and the state of the country permits, I hope to remain in Japan for a term of four years—by which time I daresay I should be tolerably pumped out and glad enough to come home and lie fallow.'

'There is a tide in the affairs of men,' and Harry Parkes, in his voyage of life, took it boldly at the flood. We have seen the boy who stood beside Pottinger at the signing of the Treaty of Nanking pass through all the stages of his consular career and distinguish himself by indomitable work and courageous maintenance of British rights at every point. We have seen him performing diplomatic and administrative duties that far exceeded anything that could be expected of a consul; governing a Chinese city, and taking a high part in the

negotiation of treaties. His progress had been ever forward, and one cannot point to a single opportunity thrown away. He had received the approbation of his Government, the admiration of the public, and the honours which the Queen herself bestowed. And now he was raised out of the consular service in which he had spent twenty-four busy years, and entered diplomacy, in name as well as in fact, as Her Majesty's Minister to Japan.

CHAPTER XVII

JAPAN

1865-1883

IT is no part of the present sketch of Sir Harry Parkes's Chinese career to dwell upon the share he took in the awakening of Japan, perhaps the most wonderful political event of the second half of the nineteenth century. The eighteen years he spent there demand a volume to themselves, and they have had one from the learned pen of Mr Victor Dickins,* who was himself an eye-witness of much that he relates. Sir Harry's work in Japan, however, was, if possible, more important and probably more permanent than his work in the less genial soil of China, and even in a record which is mainly occupied with his achievements in China, it is hardly possible to pass over those pregnant eighteen years in Japan without some general indication of their character. The outline, however, must be of the slightest. To fill in the details would be to write the history of the revolution which changed an isolated oriental country into an almost European State.

The arrival of Sir Harry Parkes in July 1865 almost synchronized with the emergence of another personage

* The second volume of the *Life of Sir Harry Parkes*, by S. Lane-Poole and F. V. Dickins, C.B., 1894.

of the greatest significance for Japan. During the troublous times when Sir Rutherford Alcock, the first British Minister to Japan, laid the foundations of foreign relations in the untried land, and carried into effect as much as he could of the Treaty concluded by Lord Elgin with 'his Majesty the Tycoon,' little was known of that mysterious 'Heaven-child,' the Mikado, who dwelt retired in his palace at Kioto, and whose face no foreigner and few even of the Japanese samurai might see. The Treaties of the United States and of European Powers had been made with the Shogun or Tycoon, the most powerful of the nobles, overlord indeed of all the daimios of the islands. But whilst the Shogun had all the real power, and was obeyed loyally by all these feudatories, the Mikado,—albeit a *fainéant* since many generations—with his ancestral prestige and sacred person, was the object of a superstitious veneration among the people, and the cause of constant intrigues amongst the great daimios, jealous of the Shogun's power. Most of the barbarous murders of Europeans by the two-sworded swash-bucklers of that time were due less to hatred of foreigners than to a desire to get the Shogun's government into trouble—added to the pure delight of the natural man in running *amok*. The anti-Shogun or pro-Mikado party, indeed, professed a policy of isolation for the 'holy country,' but their fulminations against foreigners were really aimed at the Tycoon, who had admitted the strangers into Japan.

There was a state of rebellion approaching to civil war in the islands, and the authority of the Shogun was evidently on the wane. The great object of the English Minister was to secure the assent of the rising power

—the Mikado—to the treaties, before the fall of the Shogun could undo all that had been won by Europeans since Townsend Harris and Lord Elgin obtained leave for foreigners to settle at Yokohama. For the moment the Mikado and the Shogun were still at one; both were at Osaka, with the Ministry, all united in the common necessity of suppressing the revolt of the lord of Choshu. Sir Harry Parkes seized the opportunity to induce the foreign representatives to act in a body, take a sufficient naval force to command respect, and present themselves, thus united and supported, before the Mikado, and press him to ratify the treaties. The Shogun's Ministers had promised to secure the Mikado's ratification as long ago as 1864; and Alcock had repeatedly urged the Japanese Government to remove all doubt as to the validity of the treaties by obtaining the Mikado's sanction; but, as Mr Dickins says, 'it was reserved for Sir Harry Parkes to see and grasp the favourable moment, and by an act of great moral courage to remove the obstacle that had hitherto barred the way to any permanent understanding between Japan and the West. His proposal was agreed to, though not without considerable discussion with his colleagues, and the expedition left Yokohama for the Inland Sea on November 1st 1865. It proved an entire success—the foreign representatives must themselves have been astonished at the rapidity with which their object was attained—and before Sir Harry Parkes had been six months in the country he had won the most signal victory British diplomacy has ever gained in the Far East.' As Parkes wrote, 'It is to be hoped that the ratification of the Treaties by the Mikado will greatly facilitate the adoption of improved opinions as

vigilant energy and ripe judgment. 'I have battled,' he wrote in 1869, 'I think successfully, with the reactionary spirit which was raising its head, and I trust the Government may yet acquire what it so much wants, cohesion and compactness. They rather partake at present of the character of a rope of sand, but time is everything to them. . . . Politically we are going on very fairly. I stick by this nascent Government and try to keep them in the right groove—but it is sometimes tiresome work.'

'The British Minister,' writes Mr Dickins, 'took care not to meddle with the course of events, but was a keen and watchful observer of what was taking place. His aid and counsel were constantly sought, especially by the more liberal section of the Government, and privately as well as officially he gave them all the support in his power. With such tact and prudence were these services rendered that, although the country was convulsed with faction, no umbrage was caused in any quarter. The extent of his assistance will never, probably, be fully known, but it may safely be said that to Sir Harry Parkes, far more than to any other foreigner, Japan owed her successful passage across the difficult days of the revolutionary period. In the transition from Old to New Japan—a political change unexampled in Eastern history—England, through her representative, played the part of a sagacious and disinterested adviser.'

Two events of this period may be cited as typical of the complete change in the attitude of the sovereign of Japan towards Europeans. One was the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh in 1869, whom the Mikado—carefully instructed by Sir Harry—received standing and

then seated him beside him, in striking contrast to the rigid exclusiveness of former times and to the persistent arrogance of the Chinese Court. The other was the *private* audience granted by the Emperor to the British Minister when he went on leave in 1871—a privilege never before accorded to a foreign representative—in which 'his Majesty expressed his deep gratitude for the assistance' which Sir Harry Parkes had always given to the Japanese Government since the Revolution.

Next to that Revolution, which drew the Mikado forth from his traditional seclusion, and did away with the old feudal system centred in the Shogunate, the most important step in the development of New Japan was the Iwakura Mission. Fifty Japanese, including five of their most intelligent statesmen, visited Europe and America in 1872, and from their close and appreciative study of western methods and inventions dates the marvellous advance of Japan in the ways of her adopted civilization. Sir Harry, who was on his well-earned leave of absence in England from 1871 to 1873, escorted the envoys in most of their journeys and inspections, at Lord Granville's request, attended them on their presentation to the Queen in September 1872, and exerted himself to make their experiences as complete and interesting as possible. The result was the literal imitation of western systems; and another result, strengthened by success, was a very natural tendency to conceit and an increased opinionativeness. The real marvel is not that the Japanese made mistakes in their wholesale occidentalism, but that their leaders showed such statesmanlike qualities, in their 'steadfast and resolute mastery both of the anarchic and of the reactionary

forces they had to deal with on the emergence of their country from the isolation of centuries.' No doubt they went too fast and fell into grave commercial, monetary, and administrative troubles. Neither Rome nor New Japan could be built in a day, and that there should be difficulties and dead-locks was inevitable in so violent a transition.

Sir Harry Parkes soon perceived the difference in Japan on his return. His two years in England and Scotland had greatly refreshed him,* in spite of the official business involved in the Iwakura Mission. Already there were signs of the new era. The first railway in Japan had been opened by the Mikado in person in 1872, largely in consequence of the insistence

* 'On his arrival in England in 1871 he went, accompanied by Lady Parkes, to Iford, near Lewes, where he had taken her uncle's rectory for a time. Here the long-absent father was welcomed by his children, who came to meet him with banners and flowers in happy excitement. Afterwards they all migrated to the Bridge of Allan, where he found occupation in organizing all kinds of delightful expeditions among the surrounding hills. In Japan he had a passion for hill-climbing, shared by some of his officers, especially by one of them whose secret ambition was less to fathom the depths of Japanese learning than to stand successively on the top of every high hill in Dai Nippon. He made a round of visits about this time, among others to Sir William Stirling Maxwell, to Lord Tollemache, and to Mr Prideaux, the esteemed registrar of the Goldsmiths' Company and an old friend of Sir Harry's. The autumn was spent at Ryde, after which a house was taken in Lancaster Gate, which was shortly to become a scene of mingled grief and joy. Their eldest son was attacked with scarlet fever. Happily he recovered, but in June 1872 when their fourth daughter Lilian was only six weeks old, they had the inexpressible sorrow of losing their eldest, Nellie, from diphtheria, on the 14th. She lies with her parents in the quiet churchyard at Whitchurch. To the mother, with scarcely recovered strength, the shock was a terrible one; she never quite rallied from it; but the shadow that thenceforth hung over her life, if it paled all her joy, deepened her sympathy with all forms of suffering and distress.' (F. V. Dickins.)

of the British Minister, who was never weary of preaching in season and out of season the paramount necessity of improving the internal communications. The progress of development was delayed by frequent local rebellions, due partly to the discontent of the daimios, which culminated in the great revolt of Satsuma in 1877. These storms, however, were safely weathered, and the Japanese Government yearly gained in stability. There was little overt hostility towards foreigners, and in 1875 the guards of marines were finally withdrawn from the English and French Legations at Yokohama; but the attitude of the Japanese ministers towards the foreign Representatives had become more cool and independent, and the success, in many respects, of the crude imitation of western civilization tended to obscure the deep indebtedness of the neophyte to the European advisers who had guided her in her adventurous course. The infant State had found its own legs, and was disposed to be ungrateful to the nurses who had helped its first tottering steps. It displayed a pettifogging spirit, in raising technical obstacles, which was new in its history. Sir Harry suffered like the rest from this altered disposition, and was less often and less cordially consulted than of old. He grew somewhat despondent about the future of the Japanese, and referred to 'their unfitness for the claims they make to the attainment of a high degree of civilization, and the unsuitability to the wants of the people of the laws they are engaged in manufacturing.' 'It is an uncertain country,' he wrote. 'I hope the Japanese craze at home will soon pass away.' His last years in the country were troubled by wearisome and fruitless controversies over the long-promised revision of the treaties and especially the

question of extra-territorial rights, which were not settled till many years after his death.

Besides diplomatic difficulties, he had deeper reasons for despondency. His wife, whose gentle character and sympathetic charm had won the hearts of not only the foreign community but Japanese society as well, had gone to England in November 1878 to make a home for her children, and within a year her husband was urgently summoned by telegraph. In spite of the utmost speed he only reached London four days after her death, which occurred on November 12th. 'She hoped to the last,' he wrote to Mr Dickins, 'that I should have reached in time. I have now six children to take charge of, and feebly indeed shall I replace her in that charge, while the Legation will have lost that bright and good spirit to which it owed whatever attraction it possessed.' 'She has given liberally,' wrote Mrs Bishop (Isabella Bird) 'of those sympathies in sorrow and of those acts of thoughtful and unostentatious kindness which are specially appreciated by those who are "strangers in a strange land." ' The bereavement evoked the warmest sympathy from Japan, from ministers as well as Europeans, and on his return to the Legation in January 1881, with his two eldest daughters, after some months of anxious consultations at the Foreign Office on the vexed question of the revision of the treaties, Sir Harry received an address of welcome from the foreign residents of all nationalities, which proved how firm a place he held in their esteem and affection. 'A hundred proofs,' says Mr Dickins, 'could be given of the extraordinary confidence reposed in him during the whole period of his service in Japan; his mere presence seemed to afford a sense of security,

and his return was invariably hailed as that of a longed-for friend, as well as an able and fearless protector of the just interests of every member of the community.'

What manner of man he appeared to those who knew him well in Japan is told in the words of his friend Mr Dickins. 'No man ever served his country with a more single-hearted devotion than Sir Harry Parkes. His personal interests were altogether subordinated to his public work. He accepted promotion when it came—gladly; he never sought it; there is not a trace in his correspondence of his ever having taken the slightest trouble towards getting his "claims" recognized in influential quarters. As Minister in Japan he conceived his business to be, first and foremost, the protection of British interests and the development of British commerce. His marginal pencil-marks are still to be traced against those portions of dispatches or letters which bore upon this duty. Next he had at heart, not merely as auxiliary to the main object of his mission, but as a thing most desirable in itself, the unity of Japan and her continued advance towards the position she may be destined to occupy among the family of nations.

'At an early stage he saw that the Shogun must either remain as the hereditary Prime Minister of the Mikado or disappear, and circumstances soon made the latter alternative the inevitable one. Tenacious and pertinacious, he never swerved from the end he had in view until he had approached its attainment as closely as was possible. Absorbed in his work, he was constantly on the watch for information that could advance it, and treasured up for future opportune use any fact,

judge of dispatches, and in his private letters to Sir Harry Parkes he constantly refers to the dispatches as most interesting, and comments upon them in language that shows he had read them with great attention. Neither in the dispatches, nor in the correspondence, nor in any of the many drafts, notes, and memoranda before me, can a trace be found of the "gunboat" policy sometimes attributed to Sir Harry Parkes, nor a hint that his diplomacy in Japan ever failed in a single particular. He appears to have succeeded, so far as my information goes and my memory serves me, in every diplomatic enterprise he undertook during the entire period of his service in Japan, without once causing a shot to be fired (unless in self-defence at Kobé on the occasion of the Bizen raid), or even resorting to a threat of setting in motion any part of the considerable force at his disposal. He was plain-spoken, and doubtless the Japanese Ministers were sometimes warned in unmistakable language of what might be the effects of adopting or persevering in a particular policy; but a warning is not a threat, though circumstances sometimes give it that colour. When he returned to Japan in 1881 the Japanese Ministers are said to have been disappointed; but if they found him sometimes a rough critic, they knew that he had the interests of Japan sincerely at heart, and that his intellectual irritation was wholly devoid of malice. When they lost him, the absence of one who for eighteen years had given them his best counsel was not unfelt even though—to quote the language used by a Minister of State in a conversation with Mr Basil Hall Chamberlain—he "was the only foreigner in Japan we could not twist round our little finger." And when

they heard of his death the Mikado's Government telegraphed their "deep sorrow at the death of one whose wise and frank advice and timely and energetic action have assisted Japan in the course of her progress, and whose sincerity and kindness have won him so many friends among Japanese officials." Eloquent and even touching words, silencing decisively and for ever the calumnies with which men, blinded by prejudice or their own interests, had sought to darken the latter years of his service in Japan.

'In person Sir Harry Parkes was a fair-haired, blue-eyed Saxon, somewhat under the middle height, of slim but well-knit frame, with a large head, drooping a little forward on his neck, and a broad high forehead. His expression in repose was somewhat stern, but it was the sternness of an earnest, not of an ungenial, nature.* A smile lit up his face wonderfully; when he spoke on a subject that interested him his eyes sparkled and a sort of alert look effaced every trace of sternness. In speech and gesture, especially in public, he was fluent and rapid, often emphatic and brusque. His irritability was mainly the result of over-work, and of a curious hurry he was always in. Though not, in effect, dilatory, he had a trick of leaving things to the last; the result was that his comparatively scanty private correspondence was always written in desperate haste. His handwriting is an index to his character, clear enough (to those a little accustomed to it), with each letter formed but reduced by extreme haste to its simplest expression, so that whole words approached more and more the simplicity of the straight line.

* No extant photograph of him does him justice, but Mr Brock's bust in St Paul's Cathedral is an excellent likeness.

'Like the Great Elchi, like the late Sir Robert Morier, he had the defects of his qualities. He took the greatest pains to be accurate, and felt that his conclusions were right with an intensity that often prevented him from understanding opposition, and begat an impatience that rather looked like, than was, anger. At all events, if anger it was, it was momentary, utterly devoid of malice premeditated or sequent. What slight bitterness is occasionally exhibited in his correspondence is very rarely displayed against persons, but rather against propositions or doctrines that he condemned—as opposed to what he considered the right ways of Oriental diplomacy: it was the sin not the sinner that called forth his ire—a Chinese as well as a Christian doctrine. The harshest word I find in his correspondence is "charlatan," applied in charity to a man who deserved a much stronger epithet. In his conversation he never spoke harshly of any one.

'Out of his officers he got as much work as he could, but he never spared himself. With them his relations were most cordial (though he could both speak and act sharply at times), as they were indeed with almost every one, and he kept up a correspondence with most of them in which courtesy, good-fellowship, personal interest and business were curiously intermingled. His purse was always open to those in need of assistance, after a frank generous fashion that veiled the service. In any sort of trouble he was a helpful and most considerate adviser—not a few touching proofs of his sympathy and kindness exist in his correspondence. Though in official matters he went at once and straight to the point, and was apt to be somewhat brusque and exigent, especially with men of slow or confused minds,

in all private relations he was one of the most long-suffering, friendly, and courteous of men. There was not an atom of factitious dignity about him, but one saw at a glance that the earnest and busy Minister was not a man to be trifled with—and no one ever attempted to trifle with him. With the Japanese Ministers, in the sixties, his manner was not always admirable, but the conviction of those who knew him best is that he often lost sight of the Minister altogether, and thought only of some act or proposition that in his opinion—and his opinion was never hastily formed or unsupported by an ample basis of facts—militated against British interests or the welfare of Japan herself. As he grew older the irritability, or whatever it was, lessened and finally disappeared altogether, and he might, like Julius Florus, have been told—

Lenior et melior fis accedente senecta.

'I have somewhere met with the observation that Sir Harry Parkes was not a profound man. Men of action are not profound men, they are neither philosophers nor *érudits*. Their qualities are insight, decision, and courage moral and physical, and with these Sir Harry Parkes was abundantly endowed. If scantily "school'd he was yet learned" in the real knowledge of life, but he never lost a certain boyish ardour and simplicity. Although in his later time no student, he was always a great reader, a lover of poetry, and a devourer of as much modern literature as he could find time for. His wonderful industry extended to everything that bore upon his work. To improve himself in French—the language often used at the Conferences of the

Treaty Representatives—he noted down the more idiomatic phrases he heard, and among his papers there exist piles of sheets covered with such collections, admirably chosen, furnished with their precise equivalents in idiomatic English, and written out in the fine rapid hand, that never changed save in its later approach to the simplicity of the straight line. He was a most suggestive and stimulating President of the Asiatic Society of Japan, and took a deep interest in all forms of Oriental research, though himself no *Forscher*. On home politics he had formed no strong opinions, but upon all matters of social or economic interest he was well read, and was familiar with most of the popular expositions of the advancing science of the day. Throughout the whole of his Eastern career his life was utterly clean. He could be merry enough upon occasion, loved a chat, danced with enjoyment, and was not averse from a little harmless quizzing of odd people. A truly religious man, he never obtruded the subject of religion nor shirked it if brought forward. With all his experience and knowledge of men and affairs he was at bottom a very simple-minded man, and I am not sure that this was not part of the abiding charm in him we all felt but only dimly understood. I say "we," for the whole British community in Japan regarded their Minister with pride and affection as their head, their friend, their comrade. He was well aware of this feeling, and drew more pleasure from the knowledge than from any number of letters after his name. It was one of our delights in the seventies to see him rushing about Yokohama followed by a tall henchman (still living, I am happy to know) carrying his dispatch-box, whose staid and official deportment

contrasted so amusingly with his master's more impetuous ways.

' He was fond of large rooms, plenty of space and light, and typhonic ventilation. His general course of life during the latter years of his service in Japan may be gathered from the following notes kindly furnished me by Mrs Aston :—

“ It was only in the intimacy of home life that one realized how affectionate, how kind and thoughtful for others, and how lovable the real man was. Outside of the home circle he was the worker to whom time was precious and who sought to utilize every moment to further his objects. He was by no means a society man ; one felt that to him society instead of being a relaxation was rather regarded as a part of the day's work—and not the pleasantest part. The day commenced with morning prayer, which Sir Harry conducted, then came breakfast, after which he went to his office. Lunch was an irregular meal ; we seldom had it without visitors. At five or six he generally came home and went for a ride, accompanied by his daughters and any visitors who cared to join. He thoroughly enjoyed a good gallop and always kept up the pace. But it was in the evenings when there were no visitors that we saw him at his best. On these occasions we used to sit in the morning room, which was cosier than the big drawing-room, and he never looked happier than when, with one of his daughters seated on a low stool at his feet, his hand caressing her head, he talked or read aloud. But these quiet evenings were few : there was generally some dinner-party or evening engagement either at home or abroad. It was quite delightful to see the intimacy and friendship between him and his eldest daughter : she was his companion and confidante, and did all the house-keeping, and she and her sister were charming hostesses.

“ On Sunday evenings it was their custom to have

CHAPTER XVIII

PEKING

1883-1884

IN May 1883 Lord Granville telegraphed to Sir Harry Parkes an offer of the Legation at Peking, vacant by the retirement of Sir Thomas Wade; and on 13th July the Gazette contained the formal announcement that he had been appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to his Majesty the Emperor of China, and Chief Superintendent of Trade.* The appointment was received in China with acclamation. His old services had never been forgotten, and the European settlements from Canton to Tien-tsin, from Shanghai to Hankow, had never abandoned the hope that some day their old leader would come back to the scene of his early achievements. The newspapers agreed that his arrival would be the signal for 'a new departure in our relations with China,' that the lethargy, which had sometimes numbed our diplomacy there, would be roused into fresh life, and that 'a period of renewed activity' was in store for us. Mr P. J. Hughes, the Consul at Shanghai, which had long been the recognized metropolis of European enterprise in China, expressed the universal feeling when he wrote, 'Not only would

* Sir Harry Parkes was the last Minister who combined this old title, inherited from the East India Company's agents. It was dropped after his death.

all your friends be pleased to see you in China, but among the public generally there are no two opinions on the subject. We shall all look up to you in Peking as the right man in the right place.' 'The appointment of Sir Harry Parkes,' wrote another consul,* 'sent a thrill through the China Consular Service. It was regarded as the dawn of a new era, and each individual member felt as though a great bulwark of strength had been raised up, on which he might surely and safely rely.' Sir Thomas Wade wrote cordially from England, 'You start fair—fairer than most men in one respect: you have the full confidence of the community,' and he added, 'You know the country and people better than anyone alive. . . . May you have strength to endure!'

Sir Harry was fully aware that he was exchanging a pleasant post for one of great difficulty, and he knew that Peking, where there was no European community outside the Legations, would be anything but an agreeable place of residence by contrast with Tokio and Yokohama. He accepted the office almost with reluctance, and it was probably its very difficulty that induced him to accept it. He felt that his work was practically done in Japan: the Japanese had found their legs and could shift for themselves; the position of Europeans left little to be desired, whilst the question of Treaty revision, he perceived, was not likely to be speedily settled. In China, on the other hand, there was lost ground to be recovered; there was much to be done in order to make the provisions secured by Treaty really operative; there were two or three grave questions at issue; and there was the Tongking dispute assuming more serious proportions every month. After eighteen

* Mr Herbert Giles, now Professor of Chinese at Cambridge.

years of Japan, happy and useful as they had been, his restless spirit welcomed a change, and ambition told him that in China he would find a field of honourable contest. Yet the uppermost feeling in his mind was one of duty—the duty he owed his country to better her position in the land where he had so often fought for her interests, and where so much remained to be achieved. The prospect of his new post, he told Mr Lockhart (11th June), 'does not afford me any delight, for the burden will be greater, the responsibilities heavier, and the disagreeables of life more numerous than here; but I felt that I could not shrink from the post on that account. . . . This Annam [Tongking] affair may prove a very serious matter and a most unpleasant baptism into my new life. Both China and France, however, should do their best to avoid collision, which would be disastrous to each.'

On the afternoon of the 6th September 1883 the *Tokio Maru* arrived at Shanghai. The wharf was crowded: people of all nations were gathered together to welcome the new British Minister, and among them were some who could remember what Harry Parkes had done in China twenty years—aye, and forty—before. As soon as the steamer was moored, old friends stormed the upper deck, where 'his Excellency' was greeted with enthusiasm. As he stepped into his carriage to drive to the house of his host, the Crown Advocate,* the crowd saluted him with three ringing cheers. Such was his welcome back to the land of his youth.

At Mr Wilkinson's house representatives of the Chamber of Commerce assembled to bid the new

* Mr H. S. Wilkinson, now Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

Minister and old friend once more welcome to the 'Model Settlement' over which he had formerly reigned. In his reply to their address he touched on the distinguished ability of his predecessor Sir Thomas Wade, and went on :—

'Your good opinion, though formed upon too indulgent an estimate of my past services and qualifications for that post, will nevertheless materially aid me in fulfilling its duties, and it gives me pleasure to assure you that I am glad to have an opportunity of doing another day's work on the scene of my earlier service, and that nothing will be more gratifying to me than to lend a helping hand in promoting progressive movement in this country, and a closer union between foreigners and Chinese. Though I have been absent from China for eighteen years, I have not been unobservant of the changes that have been taking place here during that interval. Chinese and foreigners, I am happy to believe, have become better acquainted with each other, and better acquaintance means improved opportunities of rendering mutual benefit and assistance. Disinterested effort in the field of benevolent labour, and ready response to the cry of distress, will have proved to the people that foreigners have sympathies in common with their own. Western science and Western enterprise are beginning to be appreciated as a means of widely extending the industrial capacities of the people and thereby augmenting not only the productive resources of the country, but also the political importance of the nation ; and I trust the time is not far distant when both rulers and people will see that the truest friendship is based upon a community of interest, and exclusiveness and reserve may be profitably replaced by free intercourse and active co-operation. . . . While I shall steadfastly strive to protect the rights and interests entrusted to my care, I shall also earnestly endeavour to cultivate the most friendly relations with this Govern-

ment, and I confidently trust that that feeling will be reciprocated, and that it will not fail to lead to beneficial results.'

On 14th September the new Minister left Shanghai on his voyage to Peking, accompanied by his daughters, whose emotions on seeing for the first time the scenes of their father's perils of the famous march to Peking twenty-three years before may be imagined. They passed the Taku forts, as the eldest daughter wrote to Miss Plumer, September 18th:—

'the scene of so much of papa's work in early days, and we made him tell us about the taking of them: the Peh-tang fort he really took almost single-handed;* his energy, courage, and bravery must have been something marvellous, and I don't think we half realize what wonderful work he has done. Oh! we are not *half* proud enough of being his children and bearing his name. Have the boys ever read [Loch's] *Narrative of Events in China* or *Lord Elgin's Letters*? They ought to. . . . To-day is the anniversary of his capture twenty-three years ago!! Would it not have been strange if we had been at Peking?

'Peking, October 3.—We travelled up the river from Tien-tsin in little covered boats, small and quaint looking. . . . The views on the flat mud banks were not lovely, but now and then we came to pretty patches of green willows. . . . We reached Tung-chow on the fourth day, and had our first experience of a real Chinese city. The first sight that met us on the banks of the river were camels, a string of them slowly wending their way along, heavily laden with tea; it looked so Eastern compared to Japan. . . . Mr Grosvenor† had hurried on and got horses for us to

* See above, p. 214.

† Hon. T. G. Grosvenor, Secretary of Legation, who had acted as Chargé d'Affaires up to Sir Harry's arrival. He died 8th November 1886.

ride into Peking. We rode across the plain, part of which was covered with water from the recent flood. It is very flat all about Peking, but not so ugly or so bare as I thought it would be. There is some green and a few nice trees, and I even spied some little Michaelmas daisies. At last we came in sight of the walls of Peking. I must confess the first sight is not prepossessing ; it looks dreary in the extreme, and rather prison-like, these high thick walls of gray brick. . . . I don't think any description could make you see Peking in your mind's eye, the picturesque, many-coloured houses, narrow streets, and, oh ! such roads ! I never saw such holes or such dust ; you could not imagine a street could be so bad, unless you actually saw it. No attempt is made to improve them. People are certainly in a state of utter stagnation and perfectly indifferent to improvement of any kind. You miss so much, too, the kindly courtesy of the Japanese. The Chinese seem so very rough and sullen, and life to them is so intensely serious. The houses are simply filthy. I don't think you could put up in one for a night.

' After riding for about half an hour we turned down a long dusty road and came in sight of the Legation walls, and finally turned in under the gateway, and found ourselves in front of our future home. All the Legation people were awaiting us ; Mr Hillier,* the Chinese Secretary ; Mr Maude,† the Second Secretary ; Mr Pirkis, the Accountant ; Mr Everard and Mr Scott, Assistants ; that is the staff. . . .

' How can I describe the house to you ? It is so utterly unlike anything we have seen or lived in before. It really was originally a series of Chinese temples, and has been adapted for the use of Europeans by

* Now Sir Walter C. Hillier, K.C.M.G., afterwards Chargé d'Affaires and Consul-General in Korea, and lately diplomatic agent attached to the staff of General Gaselee in China.

† Died October 2nd 1892.

having odd little rooms built on, at odd and inconvenient corners. The entrance is very fine: first come two courts, with handsome red pillars; the carving and painting of the roofs is very picturesque and the colouring really beautiful. From the court you mount a flight of steps, and enter the hall, or Queen's room as it is called—her picture being there. It is used for the reception of the mandarins when they call, and is a fine square hall with a stained wooden floor, and window on either side of the door,—nice, bright, and sunny. At present it is very bare looking, but we must try to make it comfortable, and put some of the curios about, to give it a more inhabited appearance. On either side of the hall are two rooms; they are not very large, but face the south and get all the sun, and are therefore the most cheerful for sitting-rooms. The remainder of the house is divided and built round a stone court with shrubs in the centre. It looks bare and dreary at present, but I think if we can get a few flowers to grow, it will brighten it up and make it more cheery. . . .

‘There are long corridors, which run all round the house,—great, bare, desolate places, which really look quite like a barn. On one side of the courtyard are the drawing-room and dining-room, both handsome rooms, the latter panelled half way up the wall and with open carved work over a red ground; it is rather sombre and dark looking. The drawing-room is also panelled. . . . The grounds here are small but very nice; each person has his little home, and it reminds me much of a cathedral close; it is very peaceful and quiet. . . .

‘Fancy! yesterday was the twenty-third anniversary of papa's and Mr Loch's release from prison, and we drove to see the place where they had been confined—such a miserable room in a ^{1st}^{2nd} temple.*

* See

If we are able to give but an imperfect sketch of Sir Harry Parkes's work as Minister at Peking, the reasons are easily explained. The *brouillons* or drafts of dispatches, which ambassadors usually retain in their own possession, have not come into the possession of Sir Harry's representatives; and if they had, it is doubtful whether much use could have been made of them in the present work. The dispatches must have dealt with many questions still pending in China; they must have freely criticized Chinese officials who are still alive; and many of them must have related to the negotiations with France on the Tongking question, which form too recent history to be prudently discussed in the light of official papers. The very small number which are printed in the China Blue-Book of 1885 is proof enough that Her Majesty's Government were not disposed to take the world into their confidence; and the biographer of a diplomatist is bound to be guided by the views of the Foreign Office in regard to the communications of a public servant acting under its authority. This enforced reticence is, however, the less to be regretted since there was probably little in Sir Harry's official work at Peking that reached finality or called for detailed notice. The period of his mission only lasted a year and a half—from September 1883 to March 1885—and of these eighteen months, between two and three were spent in Korea, where he concluded and ratified the Treaty which is the principal event of his China Mission. During a considerable part of the remaining fifteen months he was, as he expressed it, 'getting into the saddle,' and making himself conversant with the existing state of things in China; and, after that, beyond continual vigilance in securing

the punishment of the riots and outrages due to the anti-foreign feeling stirred up by French aggression, his chief business was to watch the conflict with France, in the hope of an opportunity arising for ending it, and to safe-guard the interests of Englishmen and English trade during this tumultuous time. His was essentially a 'watching brief': he had few opportunities for initiating reforms, nor were the times propitious for active interference.

Peking was not the place he had hoped to find it. The old obstructiveness of Chinese officialdom he knew and was prepared for; but he expected that nearly a quarter of a century of diplomatic relations at the capital would have brought the Chinese Government into some sort of touch with European ideas. He was, he confessed, 'bitterly disappointed.' The anti-foreign feeling displayed in riots among the common people was fully shared by the Government at Peking, but took a different form. Instead of burning houses and frightening missionaries' wives, the Ministers amused themselves with tormenting the Foreign Representatives. Masters of the art of procrastination, they drove business-like Envoys to despair with their interminable delays and ceaseless flow of talk. To get a decision from the Tsung-li Yamun, said Parkes, was 'like trying to draw water from a well with a bottomless bucket.' Always obstinate and impervious to reasoning, the vacillations of the French encouraged the Chinese to take a high tone with the Foreign Ministers, and to do their utmost to thwart them in petty details. They grew utterly reckless of the consequences of continued contumacy, and in their incurable shuffling seemed, as Parkes remarked, to take a positive 'pleasure in hanging

their heads over a precipice.' But it was no pleasure to Sir Harry to have dealings with them in this mood ; and he was the special mark for their irritating assaults.

There is no doubt that the Chinese officials, when they first heard of his appointment to Peking, were firmly convinced that he would re-enact his old masterful policy and do his utmost to humble their pride. Like Sangkolinsin in 1860, the Chinese 'knew his name well,' and regarded him as the author of the disasters and humiliations of the Second War. The leading statesman of the Empire, indeed, Li Hung-Chang, who was in 1883 Viceroy of the province of Chih-Li and resided at Tien-tsin, was perhaps an exception to this general prejudice. He had had many a passage of arms with Parkes in 1864, and was to have many more again ; but he was great enough to respect his adversary, and, in words at least, he professed himself pleased with Sir Harry's appointment. In a conversation recorded by Mr Davenport, Consul at Tien-tsin, it was reported that Viceroy Li was 'very much pleased with Sir Harry's conversation during their interview on the journey up to Peking in September. He said he would be glad to correspond with the British Minister 'on intimate terms,' and added that 'it would be a great feather in *Pa Tajin's* cap if he should succeed in settling the Annam question.' It is clear that Parkes had already felt his way towards a reconciliation between France and China, on the basis of a revised frontier, for it is hinted that Li 'would not really object to the division suggested by Sir Harry, of a line drawn half-way between lat. 21° and 22°, but he did not venture to say that it was acceptable at once.'

Whether Li afterwards pursued the same conciliatory policy towards the British Minister may be questioned ; but it is certain that the Tsung-li Yamun, or Board for Foreign Affairs, which had been established at Peking as soon as European Representatives made their unwelcome appearance there in 1860, did their utmost to thwart and irritate Sir Harry whenever they found an opportunity. We hear of high words at the Yamun soon after the Minister's arrival, and it was said that the Chinese specially picked out a truculent ill-tempered mandarin to badger Parkes at their Board. A large mass of evidence goes to show that the Tsung-li Yamun had grown more and more arrogant as the years went by. If Parkes had been the first Minister at Peking after the war of 1860 we may be sure that they would never have been 'given their heads' ; but the Home Government had shrunk from strong measures in dread of provoking an unpopular war ; successive English Representatives had received but lukewarm support. The sinister influence of the Burlingame Mission, the failure to exact prompt and adequate punishment of the murderers of Mr Margary, Lord Granville's feeble ineptitude over the Chefoo Convention and the *likin* question, had convinced the Chinese that England would stand anything rather than resort to force. Matters had been allowed to get into a condition which not even Parkes's energy and masterful will could mend, at least for some time. His disappointment, when he discovered how little progress had been made with the mandarins since he had left China, was aggravated by obstruction and even insult at the Tsung-li Yamun. They laid a trap to catch him, 'baited by Chang Pei-lun, who was told off to goad

him into losing his temper and committing himself by some act which would justify a demand for his recall. I was present,' writes my informant, 'on the memorable occasion when the attempt came off. A sneering and insulting remark was made by this Chang Pei-lun, which Sir Harry naturally resented with vehemence ; whereupon the whole Board roared at him in unison, declared that his manners were intolerable, and that they would not discuss matters with him again. Sir Harry turned the tables on them in a masterly manner, and by his calm demeanour during the row that ensued, put the Yamun entirely in the wrong and forced them to apologize.' All the same they attempted to procure his recall by representations at Downing Street. Fortunately he had anticipated this move, and his telegraphic report enabled the Foreign Secretary to refute the charges laid against him by the Chinese Minister. He refers to the matter quietly in a private letter : 'After a long wrestle with the Yamun I succeeded almost unexpectedly in regularly throwing them. They had tried to undermine me at home, and they failed.'

It may be questioned whether Europe gained any such great advantages as had been anticipated when argument by Consuls at the ports was exchanged for diplomatic representations to the Foreign Board by Ministers at Peking. We are prone to imagine that because a system answers well in one country it must necessarily succeed in all, and consistency and uniformity are apt to possess a fallacious charm to official eyes. The old plan had its merits, however : a Consul could use and execute threats with a minor official at a Treaty port which would be out of place in a diplomatic

interview with an exalted Minister at Peking, and very often the Consul got his way more quickly than the Envoy Extraordinary. Both Consul and Taotai could be disavowed by their respective Governments, and strong language in minor officials did not necessarily involve serious consequences. The Tsung-li Yamun, the Board specially constituted for relations with the Foreign Representatives, is the true 'Circumlocution Office': its object is to delay, and harass, and obstruct whatever the Foreign Ministers seek to accomplish; and although in certain cases the utility of an appeal to a supreme central authority has been demonstrated, in a good many others the Board has proved a mere Dead Letter Office, where the best schemes and the soundest arguments were doomed to be buried in a storm of noisy and irritating verbiage.

Moreover, the interference of the Foreign Office, encouraged by modern facilities of communication, was apt to throttle the Minister who could have managed things far better by himself. The English community in China had, no doubt, expected impossible triumphs from a man of Sir Harry's reputation and past achievements; but they forgot that in modern diplomacy the telegraph wire destroys the envoy's power of initiative, and that negotiations begin in Downing Street and not at the Peking Legation. The game of foreign politics is thus played on general grounds, and not on the basis of special considerations affecting British interests in China; and the Minister is to a great extent helpless to carry his own points. Nevertheless Sir Harry made his influence felt at the Tsung-li Yamun. Sir Walter Hillier, who was then Chinese Secretary at the

Legation, is the best possible authority on this subject, and he writes of his Chief*—

‘Having once made up his mind to a certain course of action, he was like a bull-dog in his tenacity ; he would never let go of his case. It was this feature of his character that made the Chinese fear him as well as dislike him, for there is no denying the fact that he was not popular with them. All the same he got more out of them than any one else. When he came up to Peking there was a long list of unsettled claims that had been under discussion for years, but they all went down like ninepins before his indomitable energy and were settled in desperation by the authorities of the Tsung-li Yamun, who knew they would have no peace until they had given in.

‘I never saw him more cheerful or in better spirits than when he found himself in a tight corner from which there was apparently no escape. He honoured me with his entire confidence while I served under him as Chinese Secretary, and I think I may say that he had an underlying motive in all he said and did. It was a study to watch his negotiations with the Tsung-li Yamun, the bugbear of every Foreign Representative. He would lead up to his subject in ways that appeared most roundabout ; but when he got there, it was evident that his line of country was studied beforehand, and all the efforts and interruptions of the united force of the Board could not swerve him from the track. He met a *non possumus*, the invariable answer of the Yamun to any demand, with perfect good temper, and would begin all his arguments over again, until the Ministers in sheer weariness would cry “Enough.” He would then smilingly suggest an adjournment till the next day, and resume his arguments till a compromise was effected — *the* compromise that he had always intended to accept. It takes a deal to tire out a

* In a letter to me, dated 20th December 1893.

Chinese, but Sir Harry could do it through sheer perseverance.'

The Minister's manner with the Yamun may have been, perhaps, a little out of date, and belonged to the old days of consular intimidation, rather than to the new régime of would-be smooth diplomatic intercourse with high officials at the capital. But in spite of some disregard of the *suaviter in modo*, it is remarkable that Parkes got his way, and not only that, but maintained on the whole not unfriendly relations with the Yamun, the President of which with three other members actually dined with him on the Queen's Birthday in 1884—a condescension utterly unprecedented in the history of China.

It is only fair to remember that the aggravating attitude of the Chinese Government reflected the excited condition of the public mind. The people were in a state of 'funk,' and terrible catastrophes were believed to be impending. They had some excuse, too, for their alarm. The practical annexation of Annam, a vassal state of China, in July 1883, followed in December by the capture of Son-tai by Admiral Courbet, had spread a gloom over the Chinese, and in Peking the superstitious people began to notice strange portents. In the Imperial city, just outside the palace walls, stands the Temple of Imperial Ancestors, where the tablets of all the bygone Emperors of the dynasty are ranged in order. Night after night a sound of wailing was heard in the shrine, and the crash of falling cenotaphs. The tablets still stood in their places in the morning, yet the same solemn moan was heard again at night; and, as if in confirmation, wailing issued from the distant tombs where the Emperors lie

buried. A credulous folk easily perceived in these omens a disastrous portent for the Manchu dynasty. The zeal of the French rose in proportion to the discouragement of the Chinese. In Paris one began to hear of a French 'colonial policy' and a future 'colonial empire.' Large sums were voted in the Chamber; the 'military operations,' which were never declared to be war, were pushed on with vigour by General Millot; and in March Bak-ninh shared the fate of Son-tai. Bak-ninh had been defended by regular Chinese troops, and the Emperor's Minister at Paris had declared that an attack upon it would be regarded as an act of war.

At first the Chinese really seemed about to take the matter up vigorously and prove that they were not the *quantité négligeable* which M. Challemel Lacour thought them; for the news of the fall of Bak-ninh was followed by a sudden thunderclap in ministerial circles. That extraordinary woman, the Empress Regent, took personal action and of her own motion deprived the Prince of Kung and several other Ministers of all their offices, and imposed condign punishment upon all who were responsible for the failure in Tongking. There was a panic among the mandarins: no man knew when his own turn of disgrace would come. To the foreigners, however, the change was welcome. The 'insolence of the Yamun had become intolerable,' as one official remarked, and anything would be better than the old Board which had resisted all Sir Thomas Wade's persuasions and made every Minister's life a perpetual scene of wrangling and irritation. The new Ministry, headed by Prince Chun (father of the Emperor), was believed to mean business, and even a war policy was better than the shilly-shallying between peace and war.

get hard knocks at all these places—much harder than they have yet encountered at Kilung or on the Min, where they were able to gain a commanding position by a course that was little less than treacherous. And their ill-considered and ineffective action has certainly failed. What, therefore, will they do next? Make war? A *corps d'armée* is necessary to subdue Peking, and when can France put a *corps d'armée* in the field? Certainly not this year, and the effort she would have to make would prove such a strain upon her resources and weaken her so seriously in Europe that I do not feel at all assured that she would care to make the attempt. She may cool down between this and the spring and see that the game is not worth the candle. If she liked to do so, she could now cry quits, say that she had thrashed the Chinese for their treachery at Langson, and take a commercial Treaty as compensation for expenses, and in order to give the world a proof of the noble generosity of France, etc.'

Parkes's anticipation was realized. A prolonged lull took place in the quarrel with France; Langson was not occupied until February 1885; the French were driven back again in March; and France having at last discovered that 'the game was not worth the candle,' in the face of the vigorous resistance of China, made peace on 9th June.

Officially the British Minister had little to do with the Tongking question; but the consequences of that aggression kept him constantly in anxiety. The anti-foreign feeling thus stirred up anew found expression in riots and outrages. The worst occurred at Canton, where a Chinaman had been shot, under provocation, by a tidewaiter named Logan; and the ill-feeling thus excited had been brought to a head on 10th September 1883 by the drowning of another Chinaman, who was accidentally pushed overboard by a Portuguese watch-

man whilst trying to force his way on board a steamer. The mob attacked the steamer, and when the vessel cast off her moorings and escaped, they turned their fury upon Shameen, the British settlement on the river bank, and burnt and looted more than a dozen houses, before they were driven back by the foreign residents, who had quickly armed themselves. A thousand Chinese troops were presently sent by the Viceroy, Shameen was patrolled, two gunboats arrived from Hongkong, and the danger was speedily over. But not so the anxiety and worry consequent upon the disturbance, nor the ensuing claims for compensation. The trial of Logan, who got seven years' hard labour, threatened to revive the excitement, and Mr Wilkinson, the British Assessor, had a difficult task to perform. The punishment satisfied the Viceroy, but not the people, who demanded 'a life for a life,' and Shameen had to be rigorously guarded for some months. Although this unpleasant affair at the City of Rams took place in 1883, when Parkes had just arrived in China, the claims for damages were not paid until he had 'wrestled' with the Yamun for a year.

The attacks on Foochow and Formosa in 1884 increased the anxiety, already sufficiently grave. The following letter—containing a reference to the Peking Legations which will be better appreciated after the terrible experiences of 1900—was written on July 26th just before the French invasion of China proper:—

'I think you are very well off at Shanghai for protection. Foochow I am anxious about, as only very small vessels can get up there. Canton, Foochow, Hankow, and Tien-tsin are the points that give care. However, I think all the ports are being well looked after by Sir William Dowell. The Legations alone can receive no

protection and must take their chance, but a Peking mob, or such idiots as Tso Tsung-tang and those fools of the war party, are no more to be depended on than the mob of Canton. Chinese pride will have its fall, but the fall will carry great resentment with it, and they are sufficiently demented or indifferent to consequences to prevent the growth of bitter feeling.'

Shanghai was efficiently protected by its own volunteers and the presence of vessels of war; but Wenchow was more out of the beat of the fleet, and had no local defenders. In September 1884 there were signs of anti-foreign feeling at that usually well-conducted and particularly well-kept port, as the following amusing letter from the Consul, Mr E. H. Parker shows. It is a typical example of a Chinese anti-foreign panic.

'Directly the steamer left, positive statements were made that 3000 converts were concealed in the Italian priest's establishment, and were to massacre everybody on Sunday. The magistrate called on me for advice. I recommended him to visit the place with some gentry, which he did. It ended in Mr d'Arnoux and myself inducing Père Procacci to put off service on Sunday and send round messages to his converts, fifty in all.

'Last year's contributions for coast defence having gone into the pockets of the retiring magistrate, the present magistrate found it impossible to extract a cash from the people, who were accordingly ordered, each householder, to bring a load of stones to the steamer wharf. Another stupid order was that each house should burn a light all night. The silly people are at their wits' ends with fright at all this, and of course blame foreigners. The authorities are feeble and incompetent, and afraid of the people. I think that my walking through the city every day, and our all playing lawn-tennis on an open space in the city, has perhaps done as much to keep things quiet as anything. Mr _____, a missionary, was attacked at Pingyang a week

ago, and again in Wenchow, but as his appearance almost invites rudeness, and as he lodged no complaint, I took no steps. Mr d'Arnoux has also been insulted in the streets several times, and the tidewaiters have been stoned by the soldiers. Strange to say, though all this has taken place, wherever I go I find the people quiet and respectful both inside and outside, soldiers and civilians. I have been to see Mr Procacci, and recommended him to postpone services for a time. At the Taotai's request I have also requested Mr — to cease for a time his weekly visits to Pingyang.

'The gates are now closed at dusk, and only opened after dawn: this of course is a uselessly exciting step. I declined the magistrate's proposal to remove Mr Procacci and his school to this island—(1) because he was not a Frenchman; (2) because I was neither French nor Italian Consul; (3) because he must be protected, and the people would only grow more saucy if he gave way; (4) because he is quite harmless.

'Placards have been freely posted calling upon the people to massacre (1) the Catholics, (2) me, (3) all foreigners, (4) the mandarins, and so forth, but the Catholics are very active, and soon tear them down. They then come through Procacci and Mr d'Arnoux to me, and I send them in confidence to the Taotai. Consequently, without any agency appearing, a silent war is carried on against the mischievous.

'There is now a rumour that 2000 heavily armed Catholics are marching on us from Foochow. However, excellent proclamations are up, no one (but the natives) is seriously uneasy, and I don't think anything will happen.'

Nevertheless, on the 4th of October the disquieting symptoms at Wenchow came to a crisis. A riot took place, in which the foreign buildings in the city were destroyed, though the foreign settlement and Consulate, being on an island, escaped, owing to the forethought

of the officials, who took all the boats away. No lives were lost, but the damage to property was considerable, 'Wenchow,' wrote Sir Harry, 'is the last place at which I should have expected the people to run *amok* against foreigners generally, and I am most thankful that no lives have been lost.' 'We must make the local authorities do their duty, and the missionaries must be protected.' To do them justice the Chinese officials were not slow to offer redress. The ringleaders of the riot were severely punished, and adequate money compensation was given for the injuries inflicted by the mob.

Sir Harry's powerful influence was seen in the prompt and effectual manner in which he induced the Chinese Government to suppress the anti-foreign tendencies of the Cantonese in the autumn of 1884, when such placards as this were posted about :—

'All dealings with foreigners are detestable.
These men have no father or mother.
Their offspring are beasts. . . .
Our country has a sacred religion.
Why should we imitate foreign devils ?
Our country has powerful gods,
And it is our bounden duty to reverence Shangti.
Under pretence of establishing hospitals,
They in reality develop their fiendish designs.
We have our own native doctors.
Why ask for favours from the foreign devils ?
By distributing medicine they entice you to come,
With a view to making your wives their own. . . .
In one month are four Sundays,
When women come from all parts ;
And, no sooner do they see the barbarian's face,
Than they throw both arms round the foreign devil.

My words are of little weight,
But are destined to arouse you in some degree.'

Soon afterwards he triumphed even more decisively, when he demanded and obtained the immediate repudiation of the monstrous Proclamation in which the Chinese were instigated to poison the French. In less than three days he obtained the publication of an Imperial Decree 'censuring two High Imperial Commissioners, the Governor-General of two provinces, and the Governor of the province in which Canton is situated,' for their share in this abominable business.

A little instance will show how far the power of the English Minister's name penetrated into the interior of China. When Mr Pratt* was sailing on the upper Yang-tsze in the autumn of 1888—more than three years after Sir Harry's death—he was told that his progress was considerably smoothed by a certain flag which his skipper insisted on flying with much ceremony. At Ichang the British Consul came aboard and asked what flag he was flying, as a deputation of leading citizens had waited upon him at the Consulate that morning with the information that his Minister had arrived, and they were anxious to pay their respects to his Excellency. On investigation it turned out that the black characters on the white flag were those of Sir Harry Parkes. How the worthy skipper had obtained possession of, or copied it, is not stated; but he smilingly called it a 'No. 1 piecee flag,' and had clearly used it for years as a talisman which would carry contraband goods with perfect safety past any custom-house in the Empire. No Chinaman dared to meddle with 'Pa Tajin's flag.'

* A. E. PRATT, *To the Snows of Tibet* (1892), p. 159.

We tried to push on and soon became separated. At half-past one Aston and myself in advance of all the rest reached what Aston called a half-way house, where he had deposited some days before some aliment in the form of three bottles of beer, a bottle of whisky, one of claret, and a tin of biscuits, which we found very acceptable, for my escort-man, entrusted with the lunch supplied by Captain Fullerton, was nowhere. We waited for others to come up: first Bruce [the groom] arrived, then Hillier, and then Maude with three snipe.

'I held a short council and determined to rush it—that is to make our ponies carry us into Söul, regardless of baggage and those who could not keep up with us—our train of servants (Chinese) being no less than twelve. The rain came down more heavily, and the roads (if you could use the word) became sloughs. Still we made our ponies go at a pace they had never gone before, and every one was so cheery that we really enjoyed the fun of the pitiful position. By dint of carrying our ponies as much as they carried us we reached the gate of Söul soon after five and our quarters at half-past, soaked through and very chilled. Aston's servant welcomed us; we threw off our wet clothes, dressed ourselves in Aston's wardrobe, and soon sat down to a capital dinner. Korean officials came to bemoan over our plight, but I sent them off to assist those who were still on the road, and to keep the gates of the city open that they might pass in. All through the night our men came straggling in, in ones and twos—the last not arriving till nine the next morning. Zappe, who had changed his pony for a chair, reached the city gate at eleven o'clock at night. Two rivers had to be crossed, one fordable, the other deep with a strong stream. The latter in the dark and rain and howling wind was a great difficulty. During the 28th our luggage gradually came in, or rather part of it—for the last two packages only reached us yesterday! All

was more or less soaked, and had to be opened and dried — the scene reminding me of Uncle Hall's hymn :—

By the waters of Hanyang (the Söul river) we sat ourselves down,
We sat ourselves down for to cry,
And because all our clothes they were wringing with wet,
We hanged them up for to dry.

Zappe and I commiserated and pitied each other. I organized an "office," got a table or two for desks, arranged papers, foolscap, pens and ink, organized food arrangements, and the next morning, the 28th, we were ready for work.

'29th.—Conference of two hours with Zappe. Then made a series of official calls. I turned out very decently. Green chair which I had brought from Tien-tsin (how it reached Söul is a marvel), eight chair-bearers in new uniforms brought from Peking, two escort men in full uniform, which they had worked hard at to brush, white belts well pipe-clayed, Hillier, Maude, and Aston well dressed, and myself in frock-coat, tall hat, and new gloves, as decent as if I had been in Regent Street. Saw General and Mrs Foote and heard all her woes. Visited the Korean yamun, and showed them more civilization in the way of dress than they had ever seen before.

'30th.—More visits and another conference with Zappe.

'30th, 31st, 1st Nov.—Hard at work with Zappe on a draft of our proposed Treaty, Trade Regulations, and a tariff of duties. Finished these in rough, and translated them [by means of Hillier] into Chinese. On 2nd made fair copies, and on 3rd delivered them into the yamun by our secretaries, who were instructed to read every line both in English and Chinese over to the Ministers of the yamun. It took them a long day.

'3rd, being Mikado's birthday, official visit to the Japanese Minister.

'4th, Sunday—a welcome day of rest (comparatively). Morning, took a ride into the country. Afternoon, conference with Zappe.

'5th, 6th.—Long conferences at yamun, that of to-day lasting till 6 P.M. I think we have made an impression and have some hopes that we are going to succeed. Zappe having been disposed to take a gloomy view, I assured him some days ago that we were bound to succeed. Asked me for my reasons, which I declined to give, as I had none, but I nevertheless told him that we should succeed. (There were many reasons why we should not, but these I maintained would disappear.) Might have been lugubrious myself if I had not occasionally thought that I must play the part of a true knight to my own little ladye love, and that I must not go back to her without a suitable trophy. Pinned her glove in imagination to my right arm, and by means of her inspiration made my pen scribble and my tongue wag.

'The evenings were seasons of refreshment. The four of us, Aston, Maude, Hillier, and myself formed very good company over very fair dinners. Always a soup—three entrées—one sweet—plenty of wine, and with the feast of reason and the flow of soul for dessert. We discussed our business and made fun of that and other subjects, plotting our work for the next day, at which every one of my boys worked with a will that nearly exhausted them by last Saturday night—the 3rd. Sunday refreshed them, and a couple of fainting Chinese writers were kept going with champagne and quinine. To-morrow the King and the Council of State sit solemnly, and perhaps not entirely at their ease, on our proposals, and we shall know our fate on the morning of the 8th. I believe our proposals will be accepted, and I told the President of the yamun on leaving him just now that although the King and the Council might have the pleasure of sitting on them throughout to-morrow the cushion could not be made

up in any other shape, and the Treaty as it now stands, after having been trimmed a little to meet their wishes, was the only one that Zappe and myself could agree to. Mentally I shall spend a thorny day to-morrow, but I believe we shall come out all right. Zappe is an excellent colleague, agrees with me in everything, and at the same time has made several very valuable suggestions which I have gladly adopted. Our *amour propre* is concerned in the negotiation, for we are sensible that *friends* are not wanting in high places out of this country who would not be grieved if we were to fail.

'Nov. 8.—Instead of continuing my letter to Minnie I send the P.S. to you [Miss Mabel Parkes]. I have this moment come from a long conference with the Korean Ministers which forms the turning-point of our negotiations. We have carried our points so far that we have agreed on a basis of negotiation, and the remainder of the work, although there will be plenty of it, will only be matter of detail. I am therefore relieved of considerable anxiety as I feel I have got to the top of the hill, and a journey on the descent is comparatively easy.

'I wish I could stay to give you some particulars of our life, but I have not time. My courier must be despatched in half an hour, and I have to close despatches and write half a dozen notes.

'Let me, however, just give you an idea of my quarters. This is the plan:—

Office.	Reception-Room.	Dining-Room.	Drawing-Room.	Bed-Room.
1	2	3	4	

Each of 1, 2, 3, and 4 are little rooms of 13 by 7—not very large. The dining-room is a good room but is something like our hall at Peking—too public to be comfortable. However, we get on very well.

‘Söul is prettily situated on five hills within the city, and with plenty of good walks if I had only time to take them. People civil but of weird appearance—the men like old Welshwomen with their big black hats and long white dresses—the women in fantastic but not uncomely dress—something like petticoats and mantillas, and always wearing bright colours, mauve, light green or blue or white. I like the people. The main streets are much cleaner than those of Peking, though the back streets are very poor slums. Houses or huts are very poor. Weather favours us, and we have not yet suffered much inconvenience from cold. Some fair provisions, as beef, cabbage, and pheasants are procurable, and we fare fairly well. If I could only have your and Minnie’s embrace I should be perfectly joyous. However, that embrace is my beacon which encourages and speeds me on in my work. I feel now that it will have a satisfactory issue, and that I shall be rewarded for all the care I have given to the Korean question for the last eighteen months.

‘Aston very well and as good as gold of course; Hillier and Maude are admirable assistants. I now expect to be able to get away about the 24th. Continue to write to Chefoo so that when I arrive there I may find a bundle of sweets awaiting me. . . .

‘*Tien-tsin, December 4*—After a good deal of hard labour and trials of temper and patience we signed our Treaties on the 26th *only*, but we gained *everything* that we desired. I had then, however, run to the very end of my time. Audience with King followed on 27th. On 28th we packed up and paid ceremonial calls of *p.p.c.*, and on the 29th started. Managed with difficulty to embark the same evening. Weighed in *Sapphire* at daylight on 30th, reached Chefoo at noon 1st. Arranged to go on in *Kestrel* at daylight of 2nd, there being no other opportunity, and every hour being of value. You know what a little craft she is for such a party as myself, Maude, Hillier, a Chinese writer, two escort men,

and ten servants. We left Chefoo in the teeth of a gale, and had a very bad time of it all Sunday and Sunday night. Yesterday morning it moderated, and we managed to reach the bar and cross it at dusk. Came upon the river this morning, moving rather slowly, on account of the quantity of ice we had to crush through. A day later, and I might have been shut out!

'I must now sit down and write my dispatches about the Treaty, for if they don't go off in the next two days, to catch a vessel at the bar, they may be delayed for twenty. I must also see the Viceroy here, and I have a whole pyramid of dispatches, etc., lying on the table, so I shall require at least three days here. I shall be truly happy if I can get away on the morning of the 8th. . . . I intend to try to ride up in a day, and it will be late when we make the last stage; we can only hope just to save the city gates. . . . The last part of a trial is generally the most severe, and to be obliged to stay here for three days instead of rushing on at once to you is hard to bear. But you would wish me to do my duty, and indeed I could not feel that I merited all the love you will give me unless I had properly acquitted myself of my knight's service.'

'The Treaty,' writes Mr Dickins, 'is a model of clear drafting, and its provisions are carefully worded to meet all the hair-splitting objections that had been brought against the Treaty with Japan, with the aim apparently of persuading the world that the British Consular Courts were not intended to oust Japanese law but merely to administer it according to British forms of procedure. The duties range from 5 to 20 per cent *ad valorem*; on cotton goods a duty of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent is imposed. The ports opened are Chemulpo, Wönsan [Gensan], and Pusan [Fusan]; the cities, Hanyang and Yanghwachin. Within a radius of 100 li no passports

CHAPTER XX

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH

1884-1885

THE year 1884 was one of unceasing labour to the British Minister—labour which unquestionably cost him his life. The general outline of his public work has been given, within the limits imposed by official reserve, in the preceding chapter, but there were endless matters that called for his constant attention of which no mention is found in the published papers or private correspondence. As he wrote to Mr Aston, 'Your position in Korea will make you judge of the troubles that come upon me from all points in this country. Not a port but sends forth a bitter cry if left for a week without a ship of war! The claims of all kinds that are pouring in on me involve most laborious and most unsatisfactory work. I wish I were ten years younger and in good health, and then I should not mind the strain. But I don't know how long I can stand it now. Certainly no convict could be at harder labour.' Every British subject was sure of a hearing if he appealed to Her Majesty's Legation, and as Sir Walter Hillier said, 'The secret of Sir Harry's popularity with the general public was the fact that he never considered any case, private or public, too trivial for his attention, and whatever he did he did it

thoroughly. . . . His industry was amazing. He never seemed tired, and everything he did was thorough. I never remember seeing him take any sort of mental recreation. He only read papers or books bearing upon his work, and was seemingly indifferent to topics of general interest. Exercise he went in for regularly, and this he pursued as thoroughly as his work. Everything was done at full speed. If he went for a ride, he galloped all the way; and if he walked, it was at the rate of four miles an hour.' He put his whole heart into everything he did.

There is an old proverb about the pace that kills, and on looking over the private papers of 1884-1885 it is painfully evident that Sir Harry was killing himself by work at high pressure. His handwriting, as well as the matter of his correspondence, bears witness to dangerous speed, and it is hardly too much to say that half his daily snatches of notes to his daughter, when he was at the Legation and she was fifteen miles off at 'the Hills,' consists of regrets that pressure of work prevents him from riding out that evening as he had intended. Those western hills near Peking were the breathing-places of the European residents, who joyfully escaped in the summer from the malodorous capital to 'smell the air,' as Egyptians say, in the clusters of ancient temples, bowered in trees, which they hired for their *villeggiatura*.

'These temples [writes one who knew them well] consist of several courtyards, with large central buildings containing the images of Buddha, the god of war, the goddess of mercy, and many other idols, some very large and all more or less ugly. On each side of the josshouses are guest-rooms, which are rented to the members of the Legations and the foreign missionaries

at tolerably high prices for the summer months. Many pretty pavilions are perched on spots commanding the best views, and the higher one climbs the more extensive becomes the view, till from the topmost temple, Pao-chu-tung, "the Pearl Grotto," one gazes across the extensive plain for miles to the city of Peking. . . . To these temples we proceed in a sort of patriarchal flitting, and a great undertaking it is. Carts laden with beds and bedding, the *batterie de cuisine*, plates and dishes, ice chest, provisions, cook and servants, toil slowly along, taking at least six or eight hours over the journey (of fifteen miles). Even a cow and calf have to be taken, as, though a few lean cows may be seen trying to find a little grass on the generally dried-up hill sides, not a drop of milk is to be got. Meat, bread, etc. have to be sent out daily from the city packed in ice: so our home ideas of country life are utterly reversed. A coolie with a donkey, who brings our provisions, brings also our letters, and his arrival is the greatest event of the day.'

In the summer of 1884 Sir Harry hired the temple of Hsiang-chieh-Ssū, and the inhabitants of the various houses which were included in the Legation compound, and intimate friends, like Bishop Scott, were continually going backwards and forwards to this picturesque resort. His eldest daughter was still with him; but even 'Minnie' stood second to duty, and much as he delighted in her society in the wild scenery of the Hills, he was too often compelled to stay alone in the dusky stifling city, where the fever, which never quite loses its victim in China, frequently brought him low. 'I am sorely persecuted with fever,' he wrote to Consul-General Hughes (4th July 1884), 'which has enfeebled me to an extent I have not previously experienced, and confirmed me in my view that Peking is a damnable dunghill.' He was then in the thick of the

anxieties of the renewed hostilities of France, and he feared war, not in Tongking, but in China itself. 'He has had to hurry back to Peking' (wrote his daughter from the Hills, 15th July), 'and I greatly dread the close confinement and the heat for him. He was really feeling the better for the change and rest out here, and just as he was deriving some benefit from the purer air, back he has to go into that *sink*—I really cannot call it by any more appropriate name. I much fear we may all have to bundle into the city again, for I expect if war be declared it would be scarcely safe to remain out here. . . . Besides, first and foremost, where the father is there I am: I cannot spend these last precious months separate, so I should simply go to him.'

Even when the father joined the party at the temple, he brought his work with him. 'It was impossible,' writes a devoted friend, 'to get Sir Harry to take a proper holiday and rest from work. He was an inveterate worker. He would ride out to the temple intending to stay a few days and enjoy the country; but before he had finished dinner (and he ate almost nothing at all times) or had any rest, a courier from the city would arrive with budgets of dispatches, which Sir Harry would immediately open and become so immersed in them for hours, that we had unwillingly to say good-night and leave him surrounded by papers.' And next day, in all probability, he would ride back to Peking. The anxieties of the French aggressions, the attack on Foochow arsenal, the questions of blockade and of searching British ships, and other problems connected with a war which had never been declared to be such, kept him constantly on the rack. 'As for my-

self,' he wrote, 30th September, to his naval son-in-law, in nautical metaphor, 'I continue to stagger along, always under a press of sail, and never reaching an easy mooring, often feeling that I have been too long in commission, and wishing for the time when I shall be paid off. The evil often seems to me more than sufficient for the day into which it is crammed, but I nevertheless keep "pegging along."

Soon after this, he parted with his eldest daughter. Miss Parkes was married at the Legation chapel on 21st October 1884 to Mr James J. Keswick, a partner in the famous old China firm of Jardine, Matheson, and Co., and at that time Chairman of the Municipal Council at Shanghai. No loss could be more grievous to the father, whose whole heart was wrapped up in the daughter who had been his chief happiness since her mother's death, but his unselfish nature never grudged her to her husband, and it was touching to see the generous warmth with which he welcomed his son-in-law to his heart. Self was the very last thing he thought of when the happiness of others was at stake. Yet it was a severe wrench, after he had ridden some way out on the Tien-tsin road with the bride and groom, to have to say good-bye and turn back alone to the empty rooms in the Legation which she had brightened for him during the past year. His great pleasure now was to write to her at Shanghai:—

'I am in good health,' he says in one of the November letters, 'for I am taking a good deal of exercise, although I was soon obliged to give up the morning rides, as they inconveniently retarded the day's work. I now, however, leave my office directly the 2.30 post leaves, and am out for a couple of hours. This week I have ridden four days out of the six. I am also going through the

grape cure, which consists of eating a bunch of grapes when I get up instead of taking a cup of tea. . . . I then take a brisk walk for half an hour in the compound, and go to breakfast at 8.30 punctually (!) with a good appetite. Work commences at nine sharp, and continues sharply till 2.30: luncheon (not very punctually) at one. Then I *try* to work again from 5 to 7.30. The evenings after dinner are rather somnolent, I fear, but when I can get into my office I intend then to improve. . . . At present I am doing everything, office work and all, in your little room. . . . I shall take O'Conor in when he arrives. Stronge is very nice. He is not so quick as Maude, but he is diligent, pleased with the place, and we shall get on well together. I hope Maude is making a little stay with you. He is greatly missed, as you can understand. We have had no events of any kind, and I am afraid the Legation is much duller than before.'

The preceding letter shows how he appreciated his officers. To say that he was popular with all his staff would not be true: no taskmaster of his energetic character is popular with men who want to be idle, and if there were any such in the Peking Legation, Sir Harry must have been scarcely an agreeable chief from their point of view. As Sir Walter Hillier wrote to me, 'He demanded from his subordinates a great deal of work, and was merciless where a loafer was concerned. When he found a willing horse he would work him for all he was worth, and I am bound to say he nearly killed me. But there was a satisfaction in working for a chief who was so appreciative, and who would stick to a faithful lieutenant through thick and thin. . . . For myself I can say that in him I lost a patron and an honoured friend. His intimates were few, for he allowed himself little time for intimacies,

but I claim the privilege of having been one of these few during the closing months of his life.'

Mr O'Conor, now Sir Nicholas O'Conor, His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, came to Peking near the close of 1884 as Secretary of Legation, and was warmly welcomed by his chief. His own recollection of their first meeting (in a letter to Mrs Keswick) is characteristic:—

'I had come from Paris where I had spent six or seven years, and I had only a very vague idea of the state of things in this great Empire, but I well recollect the impression made upon my mind at finding the occupant of this post a man of the *trempe* of Warren Hastings, of the head and resolution that has formed and extended our Empire—a man such as I had not met before and certainly did not expect to meet in Peking. I had started from Tien-tsin, I think it was on the 2nd December, and the rough native cart was jolting and labouring through the dusty, dilapidated street, and had just reached the bridge of the Legation when it was stopped by your father. I had noticed a horseman turning the corner in a canter and a cloud of dust, and I marked the chestnut pony "William" that you so kindly afterwards lent me. He welcomed me to the Legation, told me that everything was ready for me, that he was just going out for a short ride after a hard morning's work, and would be back before I had time to dress and get rid of the dust and over the fatigue of my long journey. He returned before dusk and we met over a cup of tea and talked till it was time to dress for dinner, passing from subject to subject, which he just touched on long enough to show how closely he followed events in Europe, but especially everything connected with the Franco-Chinese war.

'We dined alone that evening, and he came in to the drawing-room with a pile of letters and papers in his hand, and said that he hoped I would excuse him if he

retired before ten, but that he found he could not get through his work without doing some of it at night. During the few weeks I remained with him at the Legation how often did he repeat this! He struck me even then as too highly strung and overworked, and it was always a pleasure to me when I could prolong the conversation to midnight and see him take his candle and go straight to bed, while he turned and said, "Well, you have again prevented me from doing anything this evening, and I must be up and at work at six in the morning;" and he was. His conversation was to me the most interesting and absorbing: it was like a digest of the political and social state of the country explained by one who was a part of it himself, and who had imbibed the spirit of the strange and weird surroundings, and was able to instruct by every word.

'Often we talked of the state of things at home, the Irish and Egyptian questions, the policy of the Government, . . . and other matters. He was keen to hear anything bearing on the conduct and action of the Government, and particularly as regarded the Eastern question:—"Some day, not in our lifetime, but surely some day or other, and perhaps sooner than people anticipate, there will be another and a greater Eastern question, in which China will play the chief part, whether by her strength or weakness it is difficult to say, but everything points to China as the pivot of the Eastern question in the far future. Her action will greatly depend on our policy during the intervening years."

These letters from the two members of the Legation who were brought into the closest personal relations with their chief in 1884-1885, will show what his staff thought of him. Nor is the testimony of the Consuls less emphatic. Mr P. J. Hughes, who was Consul-General at Shanghai, and was entirely and loyally in accord with Sir Harry, writes that 'his patriotism, his

honesty of purpose, his untiring industry, his unfailing courage, are worthy of all praise. His ideal was that of a Christian gentleman, and his aim to do nothing inconsistent with that ideal. In his dealings with the Chinese he insisted on their acting honestly, but he felt bound to act honestly himself.' Another of his officers, the late Sir Chaloner Alabaster, corroborated what has been said of Parkes's habit of working his subordinates—'turning you out at all hours of the day and night, routing you out even when you were having your bath'—but adds :—

'It was a pleasure to serve under him, for although he would work you to death, although he would pull you up sharply if going wrong, you always felt that if you did your best, although you got into a mess by your own stupidity, he would stand by you and pick you out. . . . His policy consisted in a thorough desire to do his duty to his country and his countrymen. He believed that the first duty of an Englishman was to make England great; that to do so you should act as an Englishman, be perfectly fair and just, never to do anything mean or ungentlemanly, but have your own way in everything, and fight to the death, and if possible beyond it, to get it. Consciously or unconsciously modelled upon one of his first chiefs, Lord Palmerston, his only thought was England and English interests; but like Lord Palmerston he had no far-reaching policy, and was content to deal with present questions, troubling himself little with thought of the future: a thoroughly practical, honest, fearless public servant.'

Indeed many of his qualities recall the soldier rather than the civilian. His immovable coolness and courage in danger, his presence of mind, his unsleeping vigilance, unflagging energy, and masterful habit of command, showed the making of an admirable officer; and his careful and minute mastery of administrative details

would have been—nay, proved to be—invaluable in a campaign. As Lord Wolseley once said to me with emphasis, ‘he would have made a great General.’ The remark shows how Parkes’s splendid practical qualities impressed one who knows what stuff great soldiers are made of.

To say that he was popular in the little circle of Peking society—a society almost restricted to the Legations—gives but a faint idea of the affectionate regard which he inspired. His frank sincerity, warm open-hearted sympathy, and unaffected simplicity of nature, won him friends wherever he went; and his total lack of pretension or self-esteem made them almost forget the Queen’s Representative in the kindly self-forgetting man, who, with all his honours, still kept himself ‘unspotted by the world.’ If any were in ‘trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity,’ this masterful Minister, humbly following in the steps of a Divine example, was ever ready to comfort and succour. Absolutely forgetful of himself, he was sensitive for others; a loyal, faithful, and chivalrous friend, he felt keenly and personally an injury or a harsh word dealt to another. He remembered the resolution he made in his youth, and no one heard him speak unkindly of others: or if, in a moment of irritation, an unjust word escaped him, it was speedily regretted and recalled. It is no wonder that a nature so unselfish, so unassuming, so helpful, and so hearty was the object of the most loyal homage at Peking.

Ever thoughtful for others, Sir Harry was taking no care of himself. Each week brought Mrs Keswick’s expected visit nearer, and this alone was enough to

make him happy. He took no heed of the symptoms of serious illness, and increased them by his unremitting attention to work, which no persuasion or remonstrance would induce him to relax. One day he was seen painfully gathering up some papers that had fallen on the floor, and his reply to an entreaty that he would lie down and rest was Sir Harry all over—‘My dear fellow, the Government don’t pay me for lying down!’ He was working within three days of his death, and it was work, not the ordinary attack of remittent fever from which he was suffering, that killed him—gently, in his sleep,—on Sunday morning, March 22nd, 1885. ‘He never allowed his brain a moment’s rest, and his ceaseless mental activity rendered him abnormally sensitive to an illness which, though not light, would not, at the stage which it had reached, have given cause for alarm in ordinary circumstances.’ So wrote Hillier at the time, and O’Conor, in announcing the sad tidings to Consul-General Hughes (26th March) said the same:—

‘Something seems to have suddenly given way in the brain or the heart: in fact he died from the unceasing strain put on a brain requiring long rest and repose. He had not a thought but what was devoted to his country’s interest, and a truer patriot or more single-minded, able Minister England has never had. I little thought that he would be cut off in the prime of his life and labours, and I cannot say how sincerely I mourn him. I had learnt in the time I had had the pleasure of serving under him both to admire his remarkable talents and to esteem him above men as the devoted servant of his country.

‘I saw [added Mr O’Conor in a later letter] that the country had lost a great Englishman, and that British

interests had lost their ablest defender in the far East.'

This is not the place to dwell upon the tragic moment when the daughter who was coming to enjoy the longed-for visit to her father received the crushing news at Tien-tsin; or her mournful arrival at the closed Legation, too late even to look upon the face of him who slept. Such consolation as may be found in world-wide sympathy came abundantly to Sir Harry's stricken family. From the Queen, whom he had served so loyally, from Ministers and colleagues, from old fellow-workers in the service, from the Consuls throughout the Far East, whose flags stood at half-mast in silent tribute to a lost leader, from organs of public opinion of all shades of politics, one universal note of sorrow went forth. For him who had seen the birth of almost every English settlement in the Far East, who had grown with their growth and been strengthened in 'the unwavering and unbounded confidence of his countrymen,' all the many communities over whom he had stood guard joined in mourning. Old friends in Japan, such as Count Daté and Mr Nakai, united with foreign colleagues, like Herr von Brandt, in deplored a grievous personal loss. The German Minister, in a letter full of feeling, told how his 'old friend and colleague, who has always been an unrivalled example of earnest single-mindedness and self-denying industry to me as to many others, succumbed in the midst of his work, doing his duty—and more than that—to the last moment: and his country and his Sovereign have felt his loss deeply, and mourned over it as that of one of her noblest sons and most useful servants. Sir Harry's name has been a household name in the Far

*To 1925
present*

East for many a year, and will remain so.' But among all the legion of laments, one is especially significant of the unique position which Sir Harry Parkes had attained in the minds of the Oriental statesmen with whom he worked. Count Inouyé, the Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs, telegraphed his 'deep sorrow at the death of one whose wise and frank advice and timely and energetic action have assisted Japan in the course of her progress, and whose sincerity and kindness of character have won him so many friends among Japanese officials.'

The great Viceroy Li Hung-Chang was not behind-hand in paying the last marks of respect, as the remains of the English Minister passed through Tien-tsin on the way to an English grave. The Viceroy's body-guard escorted the coffin to the ship that was to carry it to Shanghai: the Japanese Ambassador and the foreign Consuls were the pall-bearers; and there were few of the European community who did not join the procession to do honour to the dead. As the steamer passed down to the mouth of the Peiho, the very Taku forts—where the late Minister had dictated the terms of surrender a quarter of a century before—fired minute-guns till the ship was out of sight. At Shanghai there was universal mourning; all business was stopped, and the whole settlement assembled to attend the gun-carriage, drawn by blue-jackets, which bore the flag-covered coffin to its temporary resting-place. Ministers and Consuls-General, Judges, the City Council, the 'merchant princes,' were in the long procession, escorted by the Shanghai volunteers, seamen from the British, German, Italian, American, and Japanese men-of-war, and a guard of honour from the Taotai. An immense

concourse of the residents followed with a vast crowd of Chinese, to whom the name of 'Pa Tajin' had so long been a symbol of power. At Hongkong, which had witnessed his entrance into his country's service, the flags at Government House, at the forts, at the Consulates, at the English houses and on the vessels in the harbour, were at half-mast, and minute guns were fired from the guardship when the *Anchoris* bore her honoured burden by. At home a memorial service had already been held at St Mary Abbot's, Kensington, where he and Gordon had worshipped side by side; but the burial did not take place till the 26th of June, when the long voyage was at an end. Then, Harry Parkes was laid beside his wife in the quiet graveyard of the little church where they were married nearly thirty years before. Whitchurch had witnessed their union, and there in death they were not divided.

Two years later a modest ceremony took place at St Paul's Cathedral, of which the passers-by knew little. But in the crypt were gathered some whose names are writ large in the history of the East. Among the little throng were Sir Harry's old chief of Amoy days, Sir Rutherford Alcock; his lifelong friend and colleague Sir Thomas Wade; and Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Keppel, who had admired the plucky boy forty-five years before in distant Hongkong. There were the Secretaries of the Chinese and Japanese Legations; there, Consuls past and present; missionaries and travellers, besides those who were proud to speak of a brother and a father. They had come to do

honour to a great Englishman, whose marble bust was then unveiled by Sir Rutherford Alcock. It bore an inscription which told how the monument had been 'erected by friends and brother officers in memory of his lifelong service, his unfailing courage, devotion to duty, and singleness of purpose.'

But if London knew little of the honour that was being paid in her cathedral to one whose life had been spent far away in the uttermost parts of the earth, it was otherwise at Shanghai, in April 1890, when a vast crowd assembled to witness the unveiling by the Duke of Connaught of the first public statue in the metropolis of European China. There the name of Sir Harry Parkes was part of the history of the city, and his memory was green in the hearts of hundreds. Nor was there one present who did not echo the words of His Royal Highness when, with Sir Harry's eldest daughter beside him, he spoke of 'the distinguished statesman' whose statue he deemed it 'a great honour' to unveil: 'he did noble service to his country and I hope we may say to the world—certainly to the civilized world at large. His indomitable energy and his endurance under the most severe trials, his strong sense of duty in the most difficult circumstances, made him a man who was not only respected by the Sovereign and country he served, but also by all those who were brought into communication with him. We cannot forget that it was largely owing to him that Japan has now advanced so greatly in civilization. We know, too, the great works he did here in China, and how he did everything he could to promote the interests of his countrymen and of those European powers who

wished to be in friendly intercourse with the Celestial Empire.'

The record of a life devoted heart and soul to the service of his Queen may fitly end with this honourable tribute from her son.

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